

the chronicle

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Accused, 33 'tried to take knife away'

A Walsall man accused of murdering his former girlfriend claimed the fatal injury to her neck was caused when he tried to take the knife from her, a court heard.

However, a pathologist told the jury at Wolverhampton Crown Court the wound that killed the mother-of-two was unlikely to have been delivered while she held the kitchen knife involved.

Carl Truffas, aged 33, who denies murder, claimed ex-girlfriend Natalie James, was clutching the weapon at her flat in Walsall. He suggested the blow was struck as he tried to disarm the 23-year-old.

Truffas alleges he grabbed her hand and held her in a bear hug.

But Home Office pathologist Dr Alexander Kolar told Wolverhampton Crown Court earlier this week: "The pattern of injuries go against that explanation." He concluded: "It would be difficult for her hand to be raised to deliver the wound to her neck with the necessary degree of force at the correct angle."

Truffas reportedly told police: "We were having a bit of rough and tumble."

Forensic scientist Sally Gray said blood stains matching the DNA of both Truffas and Miss James were found in the kitchen of the flat in Kings Road, Rushall, after she had been stabbed to death. Truffas had wounds to his arm.

The knife was discovered lying by the body of the victim following the incident in the early hours of August 7 last year, the court heard.

Truffas admitted breaking glass in the kitchen door and damaging a TV at the flat before she returned home after accidentally sending him a flirtatious text message intended for a male friend, the jury was told.

Miss Deborah Gould, prosecuting, said he bounded in "maniac and wide eyed" before allegedly grabbing Miss James by the throat and attacking her. Miss James, who had sons aged six weeks and seven years, received several wounds including one to the neck that severed an artery, the jury heard.

Truffas, of Kendall Court, Walsall Wood, claims the death was caused by a combination of accident and self defence. He has pleaded guilty to the earlier break in at the flat. The trial continues.

Dart's comnan is handed jail term

A fraudster who duped Walsall sprinter Mark Lewis-Francis into agreeing a sponsorship deal worth more than £140,000 has been jailed for three years.

Mark Cas signed up the Gold medalist known as the Darlaston Dart with outlandish promises that there were deals of up to £35 million lined up.

He signed up 29-year-old Darlaston-born Lewis-Francis, who was in the winning Great Britain relay team at the 2004 Athens games, and heptathlete and TV gladiator Lucy Boggis to Global Sponsorship Group. Using their names he tried to entice young athletes on board and pocketed £13,000 in membership fees. A Croydon Crown Court Cas, of Hampshire, was convicted of conning Lewis-Francis and Boggis and jailed for three years. The 47-year-old was cleared of three other fraud offences.

Global Sponsorship Group Ltd promised lucrative sponsorship deals with companies including Audi, Virgin and Vodafone in return for a £500 membership fee. But in reality the company was penniless and set-up by Cas, who lived in a bail hostel in Thornton Heath.

Cas pleaded guilty to seven fraud charges.

Decision to close on bank holidays 'is anti-family'

MP ATTACKS ART GALLERY SHUT TIMES

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

The New Art Gallery Walsall will be closed on Sundays and bank holidays from April 3.

The decision, which was made as part of Walsall Council's bid to save £65 million over three years, was today slammed as "anti-family" by an MP.

Labour MP Valerie Vaz, who represents Walsall South, argued these were the exact times when families had the opportunity to visit the gallery and enjoy its collection, exhibitions and activities. She has now written to Culture Minister Ed Vaizey voicing her concerns.

The changes form part of the council's much-maligned budget including millions of pounds of cuts.

Controversial decisions include cuts in funding for Ring and Ride, Darlaston Market closing and plans to axe creches. Hundreds of council jobs are also at risk.

Mrs Vaz, who last month urged ministers to intervene in the battle to save Walsall libraries from the axe, warned closing the gallery on Sundays and bank holidays would deny families access to a "cultural treasure".

Cultural

She said: "These are the only times when many people can visit, and are exactly the days when local families and visitors to Walsall can engage in cultural activities."

She also challenged the council's commitment to providing taxpayers with cultural attractions. "Sundays are family time to visit such a vibrant resource," she said. "Such a closure is not only anti-culture, it is anti-family."

She said Mr Vaizey had praised the new art gallery in his response to her debate on library services in Walsall South. "He referred to its 'superb collection' and defended Walsall as a place which 'takes its culture very seriously,'" she said. "But by reducing access to such cultural treasures as the New Art Gallery, Walsall Council is making a mockery of its commitment to culture."

Last month, 1,000 people signed a petition after the Tory council revealed that closing six libraries would save £1.3m within two years. The council has since pledged the libraries are safe for the next financial year.

Saddlers' stadium is up for sale

Walsall Football Club's Banks's Stadium and 17 acres of land around it have been put up for sale.

No asking price has been revealed by DTZ, the property agents appointed by owner Suffolk Life to handle the sale of the freehold on the 11,000-seater stadium.

Walsall Football Club has just over 17 years left to run on its current lease on the stadium, with options to extend this with rental increases linked to inflation.

DTZ said this week the sale would only see a change in the ownership of the freehold, and "will have no implications on the ownership or operation of the football club."

The sale includes the stadium and just over 17 acres, including its conference facilities, The Saddlers' Supporter's Club, an all-weather training facility and extensive advertising hoardings visible from the M6.

Current rental income from the League One club, and three telecommunications masts on the totals £466,752 a year.

Nick Allan, a senior director at DTZ, added: "This is a unique opportunity to acquire the freehold interest in the home of Walsall FC as well as a prominent landmark investment fronting the M6."

Suffolk Life provides pensions and investments and has assets of £3.7 billion currently invested, much of it in property.

The club said it had been informed by Suffolk Life of its decision to sell up.

In a statement, it said: "The club would like to assure all employees, supporters, sponsors and commercial partners that this does not affect The Walsall Football Club Ltd in any way and that the club will continue to operate as normal."

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Love at second sight for couple



Agatha and Josiah Jones, from Willenhall, celebrate their golden wedding

A Willenhall couple who were reacquainted in the West Midlands after first meeting in Jamaica have celebrated 50 years of marriage.

For years, Josiah and Agatha Jones lived 10 miles apart on the island without knowing each other. After they met in 1958, Josiah was told he was to move to Bilston to live with his uncle before getting the chance to form a relationship with Agatha.

But a year after the swap, and completely by chance, Agatha moved to England to live with her aunt in Wolverhampton. Within weeks of her arriving, the couple, of Stubbin Close, Willenhall, got to know each other after meeting through mutual friends.

Mrs Jones, aged 73, worked as a midwife for 30 years at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton. Her husband, also 73 and a retired builder, still carries out part-time work at the city's Connaught Hotel in Tettenhall Road.



The couple's wedding day

New bike refuge being recycled

A new cycling refuge installed at a busy Walsall junction just weeks ago is to be moved 20 metres after it caused confusion.

The road system suddenly appeared at the Moxley Island at its junction with Moxley Road. But it has sparked numerous complaints from drivers who said it took them by surprise and left them swerving at the last minute. Now council chiefs are to dig up the refuge.

Councillors in the area said they had been inundated with complaints from people who feared there could be an accident there.

Paul Bott, independent representative for Darlaston South, said: "We've had so many complaints about it. Lots of people said they didn't realise it was there and then they had to swerve. It's in a very dangerous position."

"They're concerned it's going to cause an accident soon as it's a very, very busy junction there."

He added: "We have asked why it was even put there in the first place. The main concern now is how much money has been spent putting it in and is now going to be paid again to move it."

Transport chief Tom Ansell said the new cycling refuge had been installed in a bid to boost safety at the island. He said: "The build was placed there to protect cyclists joining the carriageway from the new shared cycleway. However, we have been made aware its introduction has created some confusion for motorists and the decision has been taken to relocate the build out 20 metres further along Moxley Road."

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Woman's fears on HIV lover

A man who infected a Walsall woman with HIV is facing fresh allegations of doing the same to a second woman during unprotected sex.

Nkosinathi Mabanda was due to be sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court for the original charge of inflicting grievous bodily harm, to which he pleaded guilty, when the new information came to light.

The case was adjourned until July 25 to allow HIV tests to be carried out on the second woman, who contacted police after reading a newspaper article about Mabanda.

The results will not be known for three months and Mabanda, of Tixall Road, Stafford, will remain in custody as he allegedly intimidated to the second woman that he wanted to return to his native Zimbabwe.

Difficult

Judge John Wait told Mabanda: "It would be inappropriate to proceed to sentence without having this issue resolved."

He added that Mabanda could expect to be handed a significant custodial sentence.

Mr Ian Ball, prosecuting, told the court that on arrest Mabanda had told police officers he had slept with nine women, but no further action had been taken as it was believed to be difficult to trace the women.

Miss Wendy Miller, defending, said that Mabanda claimed the second woman was making up her allegations.

She has already taken one test, which came out negative, but there is a three-month incubation period for the virus.

HIV test results are expected to be known before the end of June.

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Mayor's youth invite

Young job seekers and their employment coaches were invited to tea with the Mayor of Walsall to discuss their work prospects.

The six young people, all being helped by employment and training experts Pertemps People Development Group were invited to be guests of Councillor Gary Clarke at the Council House mayor's parlour.

It follows the mayor's visit to the

Bradford Place offices of PPDG where he learned of the efforts being made to cut youth unemployment.

Jake Birch, aged 18, of Coalpool, said: "It was real privilege.

"The Mayor was particularly enthusiastic about what's being done to support youngsters like myself into employment. It was unique and fascinating experience and we were made to feel very welcome."

Rock's burning light

The Walsall Illuminations may have gone for good, but they are being immortalised by a new blues rock band in the town.

Tom Mitchell, Donovan Campbell and Allan Tranter, all in their 40s, rehearsed hard for their first gig in the town last Friday after setting up The Illuminations 18 months ago.

They met 25 years ago at a community music festival in Pleck Park as

members of separate bands. But after a chance meeting in 2009 they decided to combine talents and start a new "swamp rock" outfit.

They took part in Birmingham's Artfest last year and have played at a number of venues. And bassist Donovan, who calls himself Peace, said: "We chose our name because of the Walsall link. We thought we could keep the connection."

Sunday parking bonanza

Sunday parking charges have boosted council coffers by £38,000 since they were introduced in Walsall 18 months ago.

Fees were introduced on Sundays in council-controlled car parks in 2009, and leader of the council Mike Bird said the financial boost was good news for the people of Walsall.

He said: "It goes into the central pot, which helps keep council tax hikes down to zero."

"The money also goes into the maintenance of the car parks, but we lose money on the car parks every year because they are costly to maintain. You have to surface them, and it is an expensive operation running car parks."

Attending

The Tory leader added that there were no plans for the council to rethink Sunday charges.

"It's a decision that's been made and it's a decision we will maintain," he said. "People have to realise that car parks are an expensive commodity."

The Sunday charges caused controversy in the town when people attending Remembrance Sunday parades were slapped with parking fines.

The money made will help towards council savings of £65 million which the authority must make over three years.

NHS stalwart dies aged 82

A widow described as "one of life's unsung heroes" has died after a stroke.

Barbara Bird, of Blackwood Road, Streetly, died at Walsall Manor Hospital on Tuesday, aged 82.

Close friend, Andy Brown, aged 47, a retired nurse, said Mrs Bird was much involved in healthcare in Walsall as a volunteer.

She was a member of the League of Friends of the Manor Hospital for 25 years, vice-chair of the Community Health Council, and was involved with the patient focus group. She was on the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum which was set up by the primary care trust in Walsall.

Mr Brown said: "I got to know her on the PPI forum. She will be very sadly missed – one of life's unsung heroes."

Husband David died 13 years ago and they had one son, Jonathan.

Gas masks and the national loaf

Some of the most curious and unusual artefacts in Walsall's historical collections will be the subject of a talk at Walsall Museum.

Museum curator Jennifer Thomson will talk visitors through some of the stars of the borough's vast collection.

The Hidden Highlights of Walsall Museum is at 2pm on Tuesday.

Items to be discussed range from Second World War gas masks from products of local industries.

Booking is essential on museum@walsall.gov.uk or 01922 653116.

Heart test for young after man died at 23



Oliver Hewitt

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

U-turn over icy roads considered

Walsall's £300,000 plan to keep the borough's roads clear in bad weather is under review. It could mean a rethink on which roads are considered a priority for gritting in the event of snow and ice.

The review follows one of the harshest winters for decades, with heavy snow in December and January and temperatures plummeting to -12C (10F). Council chiefs said 18 schools closed last term, 11 of which were on routes considered a gritting priority.

Possibilities for a shake-up include gritting all bus routes and roads serving schools.

The winter service plan is drawn up annually but must be reviewed now ahead of the move of road staff from their depot in Norfolk Place, Walsall, to Pelsall Road, Brownhills.

A report to the council's environment scrutiny panel said: "The new depot location presents an opportunity to investigate the suitability of the existing routes that are treated."

"The move is also an opportunity to consider whether other routes should be included – for example, all bus routes and roads serving schools. There is a limited budget for winter service, at present £300,000."

Disputed

If a road is added to the priority list then another might have to be removed, the report added.

Four of the eight gritters operated by the council's highways partner, Tarmac, are to be replaced at the end of this season.

Some opposition councillors raised concerns about how town centres and school routes were dealt with last winter.

Councillor Carl Creaney had claimed Willenhall town centre was left ungritted, although council chiefs disputed this.

Councillor Ian Shires, of Willenhall North, had questioned the council's gritting policy after a large number of schools were forced to close.

Oliver, of Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge, was found to have contracted cytomegalovirus myocarditis, which killed off parts of his heart and resulted in multiple organ failure.

He also left father, Shaun Hewitt, aged 52, brothers Adam, 29, and David, 27, sister Grace, 21, and stepfather Paul Collins, 60.

The screening session was held at Aldridge Methodist Church in Anchor Road, and 110 young people were scanned for heart defects by echocardiogram and electrocardiogram.

Touching

Julie of Aldridge, said: "It's emotional, but it's uplifting. It wasn't until we got here today and saw all the young people sitting in a row that we realise we are doing something positive."

"It's only sitting with these youngsters that we realise how serious this is. The results can have an impact on their lives."

Oliver's father Shaun, of Edgbaston, Birmingham, said it was deeply touching to see all his son's friends coming together to raise funds.

They are still remembering Oliver just as much after five years. The biggest fear of a bereaved parent is that people are going to forget their child."

Mr Hewitt is also involved in parental bereavement network, The Compassionate Friends.

To contact CRY, call 01737 363 222. For The Compassionate Friends, call 0845 123 2304.

Green for go on St Patrick's



Colourful creations filling the streets around Digbeth for the big parade.



Fun in the sun as Birmingham goes green for St Patrick's celebrations.

Thousands of people took to the streets of Birmingham for the UK's largest St Patrick's Day Parade. More than 80,000 visitors lined the streets of Digbeth for the spectacular highlight of the seven-day St Patrick's Festival.

There were nine pipe bands and three traditional Irish bands.

The parade last Sunday was led by a Walk of Champions – six titled champion Irish dancers selected from Midlands-based Irish dancing schools, and led by secretary of the Midland Regional Council of Irish

Dancing, Carole Scanlon. As well as decorated floats there were vintage motorbikes, classic cars, steam engines, school groups, Bernese pulling dogs, American civil war re-enactors and massed tractors.

More than 1,000 green balloons were released for a fundraising balloon race to mark the start of the parade from Camp Hill.

It then made its way down Digbeth High Street, past St Martin's church in the Bullring and back up High Street, before finishing in Alcester Street.

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Hunt for actor to stand in

The show must go on for a Walsall theatre group after a cast member dropped out of a forthcoming show.

An urgent search is now on to find a replacement before the curtain goes up next month.

The Fellowship Players perform Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* at the Grange Playhouse, near Walsall Arboretum Extension, from April 7-16.

An original cast member has had to drop out due to family commitments and now an urgent search is on to find a replacement.

Younger

The show is one of the only performances of this play permitted to take place in the Midlands, but without the missing cast member, it is now in doubt.

Director Jennifer Smith is looking for a young male actor who can commit to rehearsals straight away at the Grange Playhouse.

They should have a playing age of 18 or 19-years-old, although older and younger actors are encouraged to apply.

Anyone interested in being involved can email jennismith36@hotmail.com or call 07841 332329.

Prize for training

A project which allows offenders to train for jobs while on probation in Walsall has been recognised by an award.

The initiative launched last summer has seen people complete courses in plumbing, plastering and first aid.

Regeneration officers from Walsall Council work alongside Steps to Work, Walsall Probation, Breathing Space, Progress2Work and Walsall Lifelong Learning on the scheme.

The achievements were recognised at a ceremony when they were presented with certificates to mark their success by Valerie Birch, chair man of the Bench at Walsall Magistrates.

Classes call

Classes for adults to learn yoga, aquaerobics, step aerobics and salsa will be held at Willenhall Sports School, Furzefield Way, Willenhall. For information on classes call the school on 01902 633070.



The silver statue which stood at the Dolphin pub, George Street, in Walsall.



Catherine Clarke with an original piece of work from Walsall Lithographic.



Catherine with a seat and ABC badges, from the old ABC cinema, Walsall



An Automaticicket machine from the cinema which was at the top of Park Street.

Vaults hold memories of town's rich history



A wheelchair which carried Sister Dora's patients



Collections officer Catherine Clarke in the vast storage unit in Darlaston, which houses historical items

A wicker wheelchair used by nursing heroine Sister Dora, seats from an old cinema and clothing from a 20th century drapers shop.

These are just some of the fascinating items stashed away in a backstreet industrial unit in Walsall.

The storeroom at Darlaston is a treasure trove of historical artefacts not currently on display in the region's museums.

Kept in neat rows and stored away in boxes, the items give an insight into life in days gone by – and for many, would bring back happy memories.

Museums in Walsall typically only have around 10 per cent of their total collections on display at any one time.

Among the most remarkable items is a wicker wheelchair used by one of Walsall's most famous names – Sister Dora. The nurse, who has a statue dedicated to her in the town

centre, used to wheel patients around in it during the 1870s – and it is still in pristine condition.

Catherine Clarke, collections officer, said:

"I feel a bit sorry for whoever was actually in it though, because it has no suspension whatsoever. I can't imagine being pushed over cobbles in it."

The warehouse is a step back in time for anyone who ever visited the former ABC Cinema in Walsall.

Advertising

A ticket machine, two old cinema seats and a sign advertising 1993 film *The Fugitive*, starring Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones, are tucked away.

Catherine added: "It's where I used to go as a teenager, and I so clearly remember those chairs and the ticket machine. The cinema was always packed."

The cinema in Park Street became a Wool-

worths in the 1990s and is now a TJ Hughes store.

Another collector's item tucked away at the warehouse is a silver-painted stone statue of a sea creature, which would have been seen by many suspended over the old Dolphin pub in George Street, Walsall.

Remnants of another major firm which operated from the heart of Walsall are also on show.

Signs such as a Bournville cocoa poster are among the items in storage saved from the former Walsall Lithographic Company which was based in Wednesbury Road, near the town centre.

The building has been converted into new homes but the signs and posters now belong to the museum hark back to the days when the company made adverts for big names such as HP Sauce, Cadbury's and Sivex kitchen appliances.

Walsall Lithographic Company opened in

1894 and closed its doors in 2006 due to financial difficulties.

Clothes feature prominently in the treasure trove of hidden historical artefacts, with rails of items left over from the nationally renowned Hodson Shop.

The shop was based in the Locksmith's House, in New Road, Willenhall, and was run by sisters Flora and Edith Hodson.

Trading

They converted the front room of their house into a General and Fancy Dress Shop.

Although it stopped trading in the 1960s, records of clothes were left over and chart the history of working class clothing from around 1918 to the mid 1950s.

Catherine added: "As a museum, we agree that when we take something in to the collection, we are going to keep it forever.

"This is our promise for the people of Walsall."

Plea for lights on key road

A busy junction in Great Barr is in line for a £500,000 overhaul to cut down on speeding drivers.

Walsall highway chiefs say traffic lights should be installed at the roundabout, where Queslett Road meets Collingwood Drive, in Pheasey.

It has been the scene of seven accidents in three years, and bosses believe putting signals at roads leading to the island will slow motorists down.

The speed-busting scheme is one of a number of transport projects under consideration by Walsall Council including junction improvements at Salters Road, Walsall Wood, rephasing signals in Bilston Lane, Willenhall, and anti-skid surface in Sneyd Lane.

All schemes are subject to funding and it warned they could take years to come to fruition depending on their priority.

They said the work in Pheasey, which could also include alterations to the carriageway, including modifying the bus layby on the 40mph Queslett Road, was quite far down the list of priorities.

Party bid for Wills

Residents in a Walsall cul-de-sac are the first in the borough to apply to hold a street party for the Royal Wedding.

Families in Rectory Avenue, Darlaston, are keeping their fingers crossed they will be given permission to host a celebration on Friday, April 29.

Walsall Council chiefs say there have been five other expressions of interest, and the deadline for applications for road closures was this Wednesday, March 16.

Walsall leisure chief Anthony Harris said the occasion would be a bank holiday, a chance for a national celebration and a red letter day for many people.

Reunion day

Past members of Walsall Wood Boys Brigade are being invited to a reunion at Rushall FC, Daw End Lane, Rushall, on March 25 at 7.30pm. Members from the 1950s and 1960s come together to share memories. Call organisers on 01543 459216 or 01543 684140.



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Father, 33 attacked bar staff

A father-of-five who assaulted a bar manager and caused hundreds of pounds damage at Rock Steady Eddie's in Walsall has been given a suspended jail sentence.

Staff at the venue in Stafford Street, called the police after Francis Gerard Mongan swore at them and damaged the bar and a door after he was told to leave on November 1 last year.

The 33-year-old was convicted of criminal damage and assaulting Emma Shakespeare by beating at Walsall Magistrates Court last week. He had denied the charges.

Magistrates sentenced him to prison for 16 weeks suspended for 12 months and 200 hours unpaid work.

Mr Mark Cooper, prosecuting, told the court the defendant grabbed Miss Shakespeare's arms and spat at her when staff ushered him from the premises after he started to shout verbal abuse. He had also opened the counter hatch and gone behind the bar.

Mr Cooper said: "When he was told to get back to the other side he took exception to this and slammed down the hatch." He said Mongan of Alder Crescent, Coalpool, Walsall, had breached a previous suspended sentence order given in November 2009.

Mr Mohammed Nasser, defending, said one of Mongan's children suffered from leukaemia and his wife had multiple sclerosis.

He said Mongan had now reduced his alcohol intake.

Delight over club repairs

A Walsall bowling green where visiting teams used to get wet because of poor drainage is now being fixed, to the delight of club bosses. Work to prevent flooding is under way at Pelsall Community Centre.

It comes after Pelsall CA Bowling Club struggled for years with water running down the car park, down the steps to the bowling green and creating pools of water in the spot where visiting clubs have to stand. An underground exploratory CCTV survey was carried out.

A broken storm pipe was found to be the source of the problem at the Station Road site.

Improvement work costing £7,000 have been carried out after funding was secured by Walsall Council's greenspaces team.

Paul Lines, bowling club committee member, welcomed the improvements which will be finished in time for the new bowls season on March 26.

"We have had problems for a good many years," he said. "The bowling green is a council green but we work hard to look after it, maintaining it and building shelters."

Musical romance

Walsall Operatic Society will be heading back to the 1940s with a production of Guys and Dolls. The show will run at the Lichfield Garrick from March 15 to 19 with tickets ranging from £14 to £17. For more information, contact the box office on 01543 412121.

NHS redundancies

Health workers are to be hit with compulsory redundancies at NHS Walsall as it battles to save £1.6 million in 12 months.

The organisation said it was facing its "most difficult year so far" and had to cut management costs.

Fewer than 10 staff have left the trust under its "mutually agreed resignation" scheme – meaning there is still an outstanding savings target of

£850,000. Consultation with staff took place last month and one-to-one chats with affected staff are ongoing.

NHS Walsall would not reveal the amount of compulsory redundancies, saying the number could change before March 31. Richard Hayes, from communications, said there was likely to be another round of job losses in 2012/13 when the next batch of savings have to be achieved.

School fair success

The first community fair organised at a Walsall school has been a "huge success". The fair at Blakenall Heath Junior School, Field Road was a way of bringing the community together to raise awareness of all the activities in the area. The first day of the event, last month, gave people the chance to meet staff at the school, community organisations and families. The second event was held days later and

included cooking demonstrations, computer workshops, sports activities and the opportunity to undergo some NHS health checks.

Teacher at the school Ruth Hughes, who also helped organise the events, said: "The events are more than just a chance to meet with staff and community organisations. Pupils from the schools have also designed and run their own stands."

Teachers to be cut at school

More teaching posts are to be axed at a Darlaston school. Headteacher Nick Marshall blamed budget pressures on the situation at Grace Academy.

He said about 19 teaching and non-teaching posts are earmarked for redundancy. It was previously thought 10 posts would go to the Herbert's Park Road school. He said despite cuts in the budget, the school was on track to achieve record exam results this summer.

Mr Marshall said: "In order to ensure a balanced budget for 2011-12 and in addition to the savings already achieved through improved efficiencies and use of resources it was necessary to reduce the academy's overall staffing costs."

"This has been done through natural reduction in staffing numbers by asking for volunteers. We hope to avoid compulsory redundancies."

Secretary of Walsall's National Union of Teachers Russ Bragger said he planned to to meet with staff to discuss the matter.

Walsall Council's Labour leader Councillor Tim Oliver said his party was furious about the move which has come less than two years since the trust took over the former Darlaston Community Science College.

"Despite overwhelming opposition from parents, governors and teachers the Conservative cabinet pushed through the transfer."

But Mr Marshall said the remarks were based on politics and not achievements.

Church is set for expansion

A £1.2 million plan to help a church expand into new facilities after the usage of its community rooms soared to 2,000 people a month has been agreed. Permission was granted by councillors last week.

Aldridge Parish Church, at The Green, was given the green light to demolish its rectory, church rooms and garage and create a new two-storey building. Outline permission was also granted for eight homes nearby, which would be put up for sale. A building fund, which launched in June 2009, has already collected £365,000 through donations – with £270,000 from a single Sunday collection as reported last year.

There were 27 letters of support for the proposals stating the existing church rooms were small, damp and inadequate. Two letters objected to the plans.

Volunteers will get rewards for work

Young volunteers from Walsall will be honoured at an awards ceremony on March 25.

Young people aged 16 to 25 who have made a positive contribution to their community will be given awards at Walsall Town Hall.

Kelly Cranston, of VFlex Walsall, said: "This event is to show that the time and effort goes into supporting volunteers in the borough has not gone unnoticed."

Frying the flag for the great British chippie

Many of us at some time have stood in a queue at the chip shop but if you wanted to get in line for one particular portion of traditional fish and chips you would have to travel more than 10,000 miles.

Former West Midland couple Adrian and Louise Warner's Traditional British Fish & Chips in Australia in 2009 – and wanting the authentic taste of home turned to a Willenhall company.

The shop is believed to be the most southerly chippie in the world and gets all of its sauces, peas, oils and vinegars from Middleton Food Products, Willenhall Road.

Ever since the Queensland shop opened, Aussies, tourists and homesick Brits alike have gone crazy for the traditional grub, which also includes battered sausages, pickled eggs and steak and kidney pie.

Mr and Mrs Warner, who have two sons, nine-year-old Charlie and Thomas aged six, regularly get large queues outside.

Mrs Warner, who worked as a marketing consultant before the big move, said: "A TV programme over here called The Great South East filmed us and when it aired we went through 1.3 tons of potatoes in two days.

British

"We had a retired couple fly from Sydney to Brisbane to have British fish and chips for lunch and then fly back in the afternoon as they had heard how good they were.

"We have other customers that have travelled up to three hours and some plan their holidays to make sure that they can pop in for proper British fish and chips."

Mr and Mrs Warner, aged 39 and 41 respectively, used to live in Sutton Coldfield and Adrian was a chef at Solihull's Hogarth's Hotel and Restaurant before launching his own catering company called Chumley's. The pair made the trip down under in 2006.

Mr Warner, who is now an expert fish fryer, said they were both proud to use ingredients from Willenhall. "All of our key ingredients are from the UK," including the oil that we fry in," he said. "You can't beat chip shop curry sauce, mushy peas and vinegar. These are all supplied by Middletons.

Peter Hill, chief executive of Middletons, said: "It does make us very proud to supply shops that are as far away as this."



Blaze destroys grassland



Firefighters in Walsall battled 20ft flames as a blaze swept rapidly across grassland near.

The ferocious blaze, the cause of which is under investigation, destroyed 21,500 sq ft of North Common, off Norton Road, Pelsall. Firefighters from seven stations were called to the scene at 1.26pm last Thursday.

The blaze raged for about 40 minutes with flames quickly spreading because of a strong wind.

When the flames had died down, crews trawled the area to see if anything had been killed by the fire, but did not find anything.

Crew commander Chris Hands, from Walsall fire station, said: "It was

a very large fire. The flames were 20ft high. We had to close Norton Road because of smoke passing over it.

"The fire went over the road from one side to the other."

He added: "It spread very quickly. The wind was strong so it was racing."

Shocked pub-goers watched firefighters tackle the blaze from the nearby Fingerpost pub and restaurant.

Delivery driver and father-of-two Richie Night, aged 59, of Sandstone Road, Bloxwich, said: "They were really big flames. It was bad. There was lots of smoke. I was amazed."

"It's awful really for local wildlife more than anything."

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Homeserve in expansion

Walsall company HomeServe, has expanded its operations in the US in a £5.5 million deal.

The business, whose HomeServe USA operation has 800,000 customers with 1.2 million policies, has acquired another 135,000 home assistance policies in a deal with South Jersey Energy Services Plus.

The company has also signed a long-term agreement with Mil-

lennium Energy Holdings for the marketing of home energy policies to 580,000 domestic customers. The move is part of the continuing overseas expansion by HomeServe, which employs 1,600 people at its Green Lane headquarters in Walsall.

It now has operations in France, Spain, Belgium and Italy, as well as in the US.

HomeServe USA chief execu-

tive Jonathan King said: "These agreements with Millennium Energy and South Jersey Energy Services Plus take the total number of partners we are working with in the US to 17, who between them have more than 21 million households."

"We are looking forward to working with these new partners and replicating the success we are already achieving."

Strategy over abuse

A new strategy to tackle domestic abuse in Walsall was due to go before council bosses this week.

It comes after figures show an average of 342 domestic abuse incidents were reported to police each month during 2009 to 2010.

Domestic abuse accounts for seven per cent of all recorded crime and 28 per cent of all violent crime in Walsall.

The draft strategy drawn up by the Domestic Abuse Steering Group

includes the option for working with providers in the voluntary sector to help plug gaps in the current provision.

Tackling violent crime especially domestic abuse is one of Safer Walsall Partnership's six top priorities.

Communities chief Councillor Zahid Ali, said: "Domestic violence is an area where people often find it difficult to come forward and report incidents."

Top schools will become academies

The two top-performing schools in Walsall are to become academies.

Queen Mary's High and Queen Mary's Grammar, which are both rated as outstanding, could become academies as early as May 1.

Headteacher of Queen Mary's Alison Bruton said the move would give the schools greater autonomy and control over their own fortunes. The two selective schools both finish consistently at the top of the league tables in Walsall. They would join Park Hall Infants School and Shire Oak School.

They have both already become academies under the Academies Bill. Applications have been made to the education secretary and work is now going on to finalise funding.

Mrs Bruton, who took over in 2009, said: "We have considered academy status very carefully and feel very much that it will give us that independence and autonomy over various aspects of the running of our school."

"It will enable us to be able to assess the needs of our own students as the concept of one size fitting all does not always work too well for us because of the type of school we are."

The girls school, Upper Forster Street, is currently scrutinising a funding agreement with final consultation due to take place next week.

Queen Mary's Grammar for boys, in Sutton Road, submitted its application in January and last month was waiting for permission to proceed. It is not yet clear when it may convert, although the two schools have been working together.

In a letter to parents, headteacher Tim Swain said: "I hope that parents will see the move towards academy status as consistent with both the ethos and purpose of the school and also recognise that, in the demanding times we face, it will give the best advantage to the school and our students in supporting the maintenance of our high standards."

Police are 'doing all they can' on car fines

Almost 60 fines in just 10 weeks have been issued to motorists who flout driving laws in Walsall town centre, police revealed after it was claimed more action is needed to stop accidents near the bus station.

Officers said they were doing all they could to police the controversial station and surrounding roads. It comes after an accident between two cars and two buses in St Paul's Street last week.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Temporary ambulance station plan

A new temporary ambulance station will open on an industrial park in Aldridge, keeping paramedics in the town.

The current station in Anchor Road is being swallowed up by the expansion of the nearby Morrisons supermarket, prompting fears a station could be lost completely.

But a temporary base is opening on the Anchor Brook estate in Lockside.

Staff are set to leave their existing premises by the end of the month.

It is expected to be a short-term measure while a review of provision in the area takes place. A new ambulance HQ in Walsall has been suggested but the plans have yet to get off the ground.

The location of the replacement Aldridge station has been kept under wraps by health chiefs while negotiations for the land transfer with Morrisons were completed.

Agreement

It was initially hoped paramedics would move into the new facilities last month. But the final agreement hit delays before contracts were exchanged this week.

Work to fit out the new unit is now taking place as paramedics have been given until the end of the month to move from Anchor Road.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman Claire Thomas said: "Work started this week to kit it out and we are working to make sure it is all up and running to move in."

Plans for a modern central hub in Walsall were unveiled after it became public. Morrisons was looking to take over Aldridge Ambulance Station. However, all ambulance provision is being reviewed in the area.

The expansion of the supermarket will create 100 jobs and was approved by Walsall Council last year.

It comes after original plans were rejected when concerns over extra noise and traffic were raised.

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Beryl bows out after 30 years



Fond farewell – owner Indra Joseph with Beryl Fearon, aged 77, who is retiring from behind the counter at Mount Street Stores, Caldmore, after 30 years.

For 30 years, she has been a friendly face and a helping hand to customers.

Now after serving the public, stacking shelves and delivering papers, 76-year-old shop assistant Beryl Fearon is finally putting her feet up.

The great-grandmother of two, of Mount Street, has seen Mount Street Stores, Caldmore, Walsall, managed by three owners over the years. She said: "You feel like part of a family. I'm sad to go and am going to miss the company. I like meeting people. I've served people in the shop who I have known since they were born." As well

as working in the store, Ms Fearon would deliver newspapers to customers when they were ill and drop them off with her neighbours each night. "I've got lots of good memories from over the years," she said. "It hasn't changed much, but when I started we used to have barrels and pumps for lager, mild and bitter. People would come in with jugs and we would fill them up and take them away." Indra Joseph, 49, and husband Owin, 60, took over the shop seven years ago. She said: "It breaks my heart to see her go."

The show will include multi-media effects, dance, vocals and a mix of percussive rhythms. For information or to book tickets call 01527 577854.

Company wins an award

AF Blakemore & Son in Willenhall has been handed an Outstanding Example of Excellence Award. Staff from the firm have carried out nearly 100 community projects in Walsall since 2008.

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Christian gets teeth in with a veggie-ance

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A stroppy carnivore, ditzy beautician and a loveable businessman with a sideline in bad Liam Gallagher impressions – it can only mean one thing, Come Dine With Me is in Walsall.

The hit Channel 4 show transmitted on Sunday came complete with tears, tantrums and terrible jokes.

The stars were jeweller Christian Woodall and beautician Georgina Smith, who were at each other's throats from the start due to their conflicting views on vegetarianism, dinner party entertainment and, well, everything else under the sun.

Fellow guests, part-time farmer Jennifer Brack and company boss Paul Wigfield, were forced to watch from the sidelines as Christian, who does not believe vegetarians are "normal", made veggie Georgina cry after getting infuriated by her dietary requirements and telling her he did not care if she went home hungry.

The self-confessed carnivore cooked a luxurious Dexter chateaubriand with a creamy mushroom sauce for his meat-eating guests and a stodge pasta bake for Georgina, the main ingredient being a tin of condensed tomato soup before covering it in vegetarian-unfriendly parmesan cheese.

Goose

He then told her after she ate a roast potato that it was cooked in goose fat, causing her to burst into tears. He said afterwards: "I'm normal. Vegetarians are the ones that have chosen to be a vegetarian and I'm sick to the back teeth of it."

The jeweller was also angered by comments bride-to-be Georgina made about him having "a little bit of a belly". When the beauty therapist's turn came to cook, Christian brought his own bottle of rose wine, which Georgina struggled to open because she had only opened screw-top wine before.

She said she thought Christian was a "bully", adding: "To have me round his house and treat me like that is rude. I did feel a bit stupid for crying, but I felt a bit overwhelmed." Her whole menu was meat-free and as entertainment, she encouraged her guests to try putting an edible chocolate face mask on their cheeks, which spoilt sport Christian refused.

Despite saying he would rather "knew my own arm off" than eat risotto, he swallowed her efforts – and said he thought he was more polite than her because he ate her food, adding: "I put a small amount of her starter on my plate, which I cleared. I have proved that I'm the bigger person."

He then went on to mark her effort a measly four out of ten.

Other guests Jennifer and Paul were caught in the middle of the two warring diners throughout most of the week but still got their



Where did you get that shirt? Christian, left, continually upset Georgina (right)



Christian Woodall ready to entertain



Georgina after the error.

own chances to shine. Paul in particular, with his Chuckle Brother moustache and cheesy comedy, made an impression with his warmth.

Compared to the domineering Christian, Paul came across affable, kind and a good sport – despite the fact he cannot tell a joke and his impressions of Michael Jackson and Liam Gallagher left a lot to be desired. Still he came up with the gag of the night, saying he liked Oasis soup as you get a Roll With It. (Boom! Boom!)

Eventually, it was cool and calm Jennifer who won on the last night thanks to her laid-back style and good homemade grub. Leaving stroppy Christian to lick his wounds ... in last place.

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Parents taking fine to enjoy term-time hols

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

More than half of the 300 parents in the region who have been fined for taking their children out of school to go on cheaper holidays in the past six months come from Walsall, figures claim.

A total of 162 parents in Dudley and 165 parents in Walsall have been given £50 fines so far this year as education bosses get tough.

But holiday deals can be hundreds of pounds cheaper during term time, leading parents to opt for the fine. A two-week holiday to Costa Del Sol costs £447 per person in March but rockets to £991 per person in August.

Education chiefs in Walsall say they are now adopting a zero-tolerance approach to term-time holidays in a bid to stop it affecting children's progress.

Last year, 209 fines were issued to parents for term-time holidays.

Relationship

Frank Barnes, assistant managing director of Serco, the private company in charge of education, said: "There is a strong relationship between absence and attainment."

In Dudley, cabinet member Councillor Liz Walker said: "The number of penalty notices issued to parents for a child's unauthorised leave of absence during the 2009-10 school year was 126 and for the current school year it is 162 to date."

But fines are not so common elsewhere.

No parents in Sandwell have been fined for taking children on holidays as there have been no referrals to the education department from schools.

Wolverhampton City Council said it takes action against parents only where children are missing enough lessons for it to affect their educational attainment.

Staffordshire County Council also said holidays during term time were not individually fined. Cabinet member Liz Staples said: "Any notice issued takes into account overall attendance rates, so if holidays are within that absence, this could result in a fine."

Making a sure start for 10 years

Celebrations have been held to mark 10 years of a Government scheme at Blakenall which aims to give youngsters the best start in life.

The SureStart project started in a classroom at the former TP Riley Annex in Field Road in March 2001 with a team of four staff.

Programme manager Carol Ferron-Smith said: "Developing a SureStart in the area was a challenge."

"Making sure that services and activities were seen as a helping hand for children and their parents was at the centre of the vision we had for the roll-out of the SureStart programme."

Displays documented the last 10 years of work as staff, youngsters and parents gathered at the SureStart Blakenall and Valley Children's Centre to celebrate the occasion.

The centre was opened in June 2004 by Slade star Noddy Holder. Health and family support co-ordinator Sioux Beddow said the programme had benefited the community over the years.

She said: "It is rewarding to see a family who have come to us in crisis benefit from the specialist support and go on to have a positive and fulfilling family life."



Children development officer Vina Patel, back left, with Charlotte Heather, aged one, and Sioux Beddow, health and family support co-ordinator, and, front, programme manager Carol Ferron-Smith with Sophie Heather, two.

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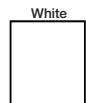


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thechronicle
Teenager
exposes
himself

Police are hunting a teenager who indecently exposed himself to a woman while she walked her dogs in Brownhills.

The incident took place between 6.15pm and 6.25pm on March 7 as the victim, aged 38, walked along a disused railway line off Bullows Road.

The flasher was white, skinny, aged 14 to 17, with brown hair and wearing a beige cardigan and hood over a navy sweatshirt and navy tracksuit.

After indecently exposing himself, he ran off towards Pelsall.

Pc Dawn Pinches, from the Brownhills neighbourhood police team, said: "We are anxious to identify the offender." Call Walsall police on 0345 113 5000.

Author date

Best-selling novelist Katie Fforde is at Aldridge Library on Tuesday, March 22. The writer, from Gloucestershire, will be at the Rookery Lane library at 2.30pm and the event is free to attend. For more information, call 01922 653121.

Prison for father who punched youth in row

A man who punched a teenager leaving him fighting for his life in hospital has been sentenced to 16 months in prison.

Father-of-two Robert Bagnall, aged 24, appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on

The sentence is not enough says Kearon

A Walsall teenager who was left fighting for his life after a street fight says 16 months in prison is not enough for his attacker, Robert Bagnall. Kearon McNicol has told how he had had to learn to walk again after nearly dying.

The 19-year-old, of Newhome Way, Blakenall, said after all the months of rehabilitation he had been through to recover from his catastrophic head injury, the man who caused it should have been jailed for longer.

He said: "He will only have to do eight months in jail, and I nearly died. I have had to learn to walk again and I get headaches a lot. I can't play football, sports or go to the gym. I know it was a two-way fight but I came out of it far worse than him."

His mother, Caroline, 36, who was prepared for the worst by doctors when Kearon was in hospital, and believed for days that her son would die, said of Bagnall's sentence: "It isn't long enough. He could have killed him."

The former Shelfield Academy student spent nearly a month in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in Birmingham, after the attack.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Friday after admitting unlawful wounding which left 19-year-old Kearon McNicol in a coma. Bagnall, of Wye Road, Bloxwich, stared straight ahead as sentence was handed down.

Mr David Lees, prosecuting, said Bagnall had a string of previous convictions for offences including affray, disorder and using threatening behaviour.

Labourer Bagnall and Mr McNicol started arguing on October 9 after having been at the same party hours earlier, the court heard.

Operation

Mr Stephen Cadwaladr, defending, said Bagnall made the first contact in the imminent punch-up which spilled out onto Ryde Street, Bloxwich.

He said the punch Bagnall had thrown at Mr McNicol did not cause a great deal of harm in itself, but that grave injuries were caused when the teenager's head hit the ground.

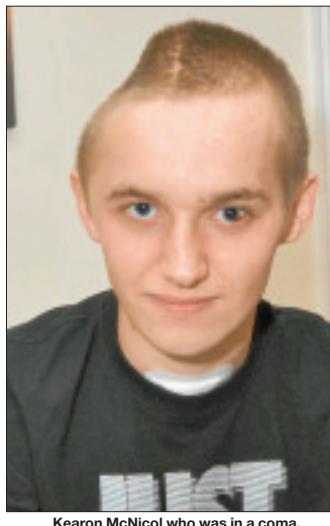
Mr McNicol was knocked unconscious and suffered a brain haemorrhage. He had five hours of surgery at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, to remove parts of his skull, and doctors induced into a coma to prevent his brain from swelling.

He is now awaiting an operation to insert a titanium plate in his head.

Bagnall denied grievous bodily harm with intent, which was accepted by the prosecution.

Judge Martin Walsh told him: "It is implicit in your plea that you did not intend to cause really serious injury, but really serious injury you did cause."

If Bagnall had been convicted after a trial the sentence would have been two years in jail, he said.



Kearon McNicol who was in a coma.

Mother and boy flee as home burns

A woman and teenage boy fled their Walsall home as flames raged through it. The fire at a two-storey semi in Mackay Road, Bloxwich, started after a chip pan was left unattended.

The fire destroyed 70 per cent of both the ground and first floor, and the entire property was affected by heat and smoke.

Fire crews from Walsall and Bloxwich were called at 11.36pm last Thursday and later requested another crew from Walsall and an ambulance.

Rescued

A woman in her 40s and a 15-year-old boy escaped before firefighters arrived and were treated for smoke inhalation.

Firefighters also rescued a dog.

Crew commander Richard Jones said the smoke alarm had saved the occupants' lives.

He added: "They were lucky. A chip pan was left unattended and the woman had fallen asleep.

"The boy woke when he heard the smoke alarm."

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Three-year plan on street repairs

Crumbling pavements alongside a main road in Brownhills are to be repaired within the next three years at the cost of tens of thousands of pounds.

The move has been welcomed by traders and a residents group after concerns that mobility scooter riders were putting their safety at risk by riding along the Chester Road North carriageway to avoid potholes.

Highways officers at Walsall Council said repairs were scheduled to be done.

Diane Jones, of Brownhills Local Committee, said: "The footpath between The Hussey Arms and the Rising Sun is very bad. I would say it is impossible for wheelchair users to use it. The surface is crumbling."

"There are a number of mobility scooter users who ride from the direction of the Rising Sun on the A5 up to Brownhills High Street."

"There have been reports of some trundling along the road which is dangerous as it's so busy." Town centre traders have also called for improvements to the pavement in High Street near The Miner statue to spruce it up.

Walsall Council's highways asset boss Richard Pohribnyi said: "An inspection of the footways outside Wilkinson's and Poxon's has revealed two blocked gullies.

"We're aware of the condition of the footway along Chester Road North. We intend to include this section in the next three-year maintenance programme."

Massage offer for mothers

Reflexology could soon be offered free to all pregnant women attending Walsall Manor Hospital after a study conducted there showed it can help encourage natural births.

The study, which looked at 100 overdue women who had a session of the foot massage treatment against 100 mothers who had not, showed the first group were more likely to go into labour quicker and less likely to require strong pain relief.

The research was shortlisted for an award from the Royal College of Midwives, and midwives told a meeting recently that they had secured funding to roll out the treatments for all women at the hospital.

Eight more midwives will undertake the six-month training in reflexology to offer a seven-day service to all pregnant women.

Show to end

The exhibition The Life of the Mind: Love, Sorrow and Obsession at The New Art Gallery Walsall ends March 20.

Paul is hoping to cop the record for run

Paul Swan is the kind of police officer criminals dread being chased by – because the Walsall bobby has more stamina than most crooks could fathom.

Father-of-two Pc Swan is hoping to break the world record for the quickest time to run a marathon in costume and will be donning all his police gear in the attempt to raise money for charity Cancer Research.

A regular day for the officer, who has run more than 30 marathons, is to get up at 3.30am and run 10 miles before work.

After work he will run another seven. The world record for running a marathon in a costume is just under five hours, and with 48-year-old Pc Swan's personal best time being two hours, 29 minutes and four seconds, he is set to smash the record on April 17.

Both wife, Janice, 46, and father, Derek, 75, were diagnosed with cancer. Janice got the all-clear before Christmas. To sponsor visit www.justgiving.com/PauSwan1.



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Negotiations over cafe at library

The cafe at Bloxwich library could finally open for business – six months after the new £1.2 million building was opened.

Two potential operators are in negotiations with Walsall Council to take on the cafe bar inside the new-look library.

The council last year asked entrepreneurs to complete an "invitation to quote". But despite replies from up to 60 interested parties, the council said no suitable applicants were found.

Mayor is up for hire

Businesses, schools and groups can bid to "buy" a slice of the Mayor of Walsall's time.

Councillor Gary Clarke is hoping to boost his charity fund by for Walsall Hospice and disadvantaged children.

"I don't mind getting my hands dirty. All I would say is that I'm not the best cook in the world so that may not be the best thing to get me doing."

To bid for the mayor's time visit www.walsall.gov.uk/mayor_for_hire or contact Anne Ward 01922 725515.

Books on the move

Two new mobile libraries worth £276,000 are to go on the road in Walsall.

The bright purple and orange vehicles will be out and about in Walsall.

The libraries will make around 40 stops each week, offering adult and children's books, DVDs and CDs and will be visiting sheltered accommodation sites, adult training centres, residential and nursing homes.

Bakery is cooking up new business

A historic Walsall bakery and sandwich shop that closed almost four months ago has reopened after a new investor rescued it.

The award-winning Fletchers Foods Ltd, Stafford Street had traded for at least 70 years before it closed suddenly after bailiffs served a possession notice on the previous owner, Best Deli Ltd.

Three of the four people who lost their jobs when the shop closed were back at work last week.

Assistant Nicola Southwick said: "I'm very excited that we've reopened and I'm looking forward to seeing the customers come in again."

New appeal over attack

Walsall police are reappealing for information after a homeless man was attacked in Pleck.

The 57-year-old was set upon by up to five men in Darlaston Road on February 25. The victim was hospitalised with a broken arm, bruises and deep cuts.

His attackers were white men in their 20s. Anyone with information should call 0345 113 5000.



Staff Andrea Harding, Elizabeth Jones and Nicola Southwick at the shop

It has meant the cafe has not had an owner since the library opened in September.

However, council chiefs are now optimistic an ideal operator can be found and complete the transformation of the building.

It comes as the contract to run Walsall Leather Museum's in-house cafe is up for grabs again – for the second time in eight months.

Sue Grainger, head of libraries, heritage

and arts at Walsall Council, said: "We are in talks with two organisations who have expressed interest in operating the cafe at Bookmark Bloxwich."

"Obviously our priority is that the food and service at the cafe matches the high standards maintained by our library staff."

The aim is to provide a regular day-time cafe and occasional evening bar facilities at the building, in Elmoro Row.

The venue has been used for concerts,

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Youth offending team disappoints inspector

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Government inspectors have called for "substantial improvement" in the way Walsall's youth offending team protects the public from harm.

An inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspection of Probation found that the service is falling below the national average.

The team works to rehabilitate young offenders and keep them on the straight and narrow.

Watchdogs assessed three key areas: risk of harm by the offenders to other people, the likelihood of reoffending, and safeguarding.

They found work on reducing the risk of harm to others was carried out well enough only 49 per cent of the time, and said this required "substantial improvement".

Safeguarding work was judged to be done well enough 64 per cent of the time, below the national average of 67 per cent.

Work on reducing the likelihood of reoffending also fell below the national average of 69 per cent at 63 per cent.

Leadership

A report by assistant chief inspector Julie Fox said: "We consider this a slightly disappointing and mixed set of findings."

"However, we were encouraged by the standard of practice that the new strategic lead manager wanted to achieve which was in line with the criteria for this inspection."

"There were some signs of improvement in practice."

The report follows a week-long inspection of youth services, which took place last November to make a judgment of the service over the preceding 12 months.

Council chiefs say the areas of concern highlighted in the report had already been identified before the inspection by the service's newly-formed leadership team. They claim an action plan which reflects the findings in the report is already well advanced and will only need slight improvements before being submitted to HMIP as a follow-up.

Councillor Rachel Andrew, cabinet member for children's services, said: "The youth justice service is embracing the changes and improvements are rapid as they need to be."

"The inspectors paid tribute to both the leadership team and the practitioners who showed enthusiasm, dedication and commitment throughout and are noted in the reports as 'keen to learn'."

Fair proves to be success

The first community fair organised at a Walsall school has been hailed as a "huge success".

The fair was held at Blakenall Heath Junior School, in Field Road, as a way of bringing the community together and raise awareness of activities in the area.

The first day of the event last month, gave people the chance to meet staff at the school, community organisations and families.

The second event was held days later and included cooking demonstrations, computer workshops, sports activities and the opportunity to undergo National Health Service checks.

A teacher at the school, Ruth Hughes, who also helped organise the events, said: "The events are more than just a chance to meet with staff and community organisations."

Pupils from the schools have also designed and run their own stands to raise awareness of charities."

Ms Hughes added: "The children have shown a great level of passion for the work these charities do, and are looking forward to raising even more awareness of good causes."



Blakenall Heath Junior School pupils who held a community day to raise money for charities - Leah Morgan, Alicia Rossington, Jake Millward, all aged 10.

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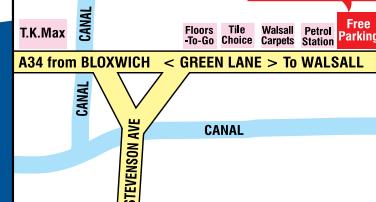
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First impression of new centre



Artist's impression of the centre.

This is how a new £1.3 million youth centre in Walsall will look when it opens next year.

Plans for the complex at Joseph Leckie Community Technology College, Delves, had been ditched following a review by the Department for Education.

But delighted Walsall council chiefs have managed to secure Big Lottery Funding, meaning the scheme has now been reined in. Work on the new centre is expected to start within weeks at the site in Whistead Road West.

A bike shelter and outside seating areas will be included as will plants and trees to add a splash of colour and a second floor balcony. Arts, music and sport will all be on

offer at the youth club, as well as support and advice services.

It will be a welcome boost for youngsters in the area and pupils at Joseph Leckie School, who missed out on a rebuild of their school when the government pulled the plug on the borough's Building Schools for the Future scheme.

In 2007, pupils made a DVD to show government ministers the state of their crumbling building, which was presented to Lord Adonis in Birmingham.

Headteacher Keith Whittlestone said he and the staff were devastated when plans collapsed to rebuild the school completely under the £100 million Building Schools for the Future programme.

Minibus donated to group

Fundraisers taking on a cycle challenge for a new hospice said they were overwhelmed and grateful after a minibus was donated to them.

Management Solutions, Walsall appealed for a minibus after one they were due to get was withdrawn. Now a new minibus has been loaned to the 20-strong group.

Graham Cornfield, managing director, said: "Rod Dickson from Croft Community School rang us and said he could supply one."

"We would just like to say a big thank you to all the people who replied."

The bus has been donated on behalf of the Walsall School Holiday Camp Trust.

Management Solutions, Green Lane, tackle an 88 mile tandem bike ride on April 3 and is still looking for sponsors, to raise money for the new St Giles Walsall Hospice.

To help with sponsorship call Mr Cornfield on 07814125053

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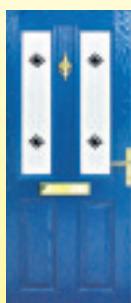
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New faces boost for hospice



St Giles Hospice Lottery representatives back from right, Susan Ward, Michael Potter and Martyn Leadbettter, and front Susan Garlick prepare to go out in Walsall.

Fundraising for the soon to be opened St Giles Walsall Hospice has been given a boost with four new lottery canvassers to work in Walsall.

The sales representatives have hit the streets of Walsall and surrounding areas to encourage people to support their local charity by playing the hospice lottery.

Martyn Leadbettter, Susan Garlick, Michael Potter and Susan Ward, will all be out and about in the community to promote St Giles Hospice Lottery.

St Giles lottery costs £1 a week to play and gives away over £3,000 in prizes every week—including a £2,000 jackpot!

It is set to play a key role in fundraising for the new St Giles Walsall Hospice facility, which is due

to welcome its first patients this Spring, with all proceeds going towards providing specialist care for local people with cancer and other serious illnesses.

Exclusive to St Giles Lottery players is the Hospice Discount Card, offering typically 10 per cent off goods and services at more than 120 shops and businesses across the region, while those signing up for a year's membership in advance will receive "Sophie", the highly collectable lottery bear as a special thank-you gift.

Richard Simmonds, St Giles Hospice Lottery Commercial Manager, says: "We're really pleased to welcome Martyn, Susan, Michael and Susan to the hospice lottery team."

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Six-month ultimatum for fire church owner

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Owners of a fire-ravaged church in Walsall must demolish the landmark building within six months or face hefty charges for the work, council bosses warned.

Walsall Council is to issue an order for the dilapidated Grade II-listed Mellish Road Methodist Church to be bulldozed by autumn after almost two decades of being an eyesore.

Members of the planning committee are expected to agree to a Section 215 notice for the site, on the junction of Lichfield Street and Butts Road.

If this is not complied with inside six months, the council could order the demolition itself and bill the owners for the work.

Walsall Council's regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "We have made it clear to the owners that action is required and that local residents and councillors want a resolution to this as soon as possible.

"Committee members will be given the opportunity to authorise the serving of a Section 215 notice that will require the owners to demolish the building within six months.

Vandals

"If the owners fail to comply within this timescale then the council could arrange a demolition of the building and seek to recover the costs incurred from the owners."

The church has been left at the mercy of vandals and arsonists since closing in November 1992 because of structural problems, having been built on the site of a former limestone mine in 1910.

It has since been bought by a consortium of businessmen.

The Government backed a decision to demolish Mellish Road church last October and planning permission was agreed when English Heritage removed their objections.

The cost of refurbishing the building was expected to reach £2.5 million, which was deemed not viable in the current economic climate.

The owners of the site were unavailable for comment this week.

England rugby red rose for Ryan



Ryan Mason celebrates being chosen for an England squad with Steve Thompson, of Burntwood Rugby Club, and teachers Karen Geldard-Williams and Nick James

A Walsall teenager was celebrating this week after catching the eye of the England rugby selectors.

Ryan Mason, who is in Year 11 at Brownhills Community Technology College, has been hailed as a great sporting role model for his fellow students.

The 16-year-old, who has been selected to play for the England B squad for the England 16 group, was introduced to the sport when in Year 7.

The youngster, who lives in Pelsall, soon showed a natural ability and flair.

Teachers Karen Geldard-Williams set up a link with Burntwood Rugby Club to help develop students' skills.

Burntwood coach Steve Thompson and PE teacher Nick James set up an extracurricular rugby club for pupils, which Ryan joined. He has now progressed quickly through the ranks at Burntwood Rugby Club, on to county level, Midlands level and the Leicester Tigers academy.

Helen Keenan, headteacher, said: "We are very proud of his achievements and wish him every success in the future."

“The Switchover Help Scheme made my switch to digital TV easy”

You may be entitled to help, just like Jean if you're 75 and over or eligible disabled.

“I love watching telly. Feet up with a cuppa, watching Bargain Hunt. Paradise.

But something came between me and my telly. They call it ‘the digital TV switchover’. It's when the analogue signal is turned off and you start to lose your TV channels, unless you're ready. It comes to this area soon and will affect every TV in your home that isn't ready for switchover. No point sticking your head in the sand hoping it will go away. It needs sorting.

Help is at hand

As it turned out, there was no need for me to fret. I discovered that everyone 75 and over or eligible disabled was entitled to help switching one of their TVs to digital. I didn't even have to ask. An information pack from the Switchover Help Scheme just turned up one morning in the post. It's run by the BBC. For £40 they will arrange for an approved installer to supply and install everything. If you're eligible and also on certain income-related benefits you don't pay a penny. There are also other digital options to choose from, but they may cost a bit more.



Alan the installer

Well, they didn't have to tell me twice. I rang up the freephone number and got the help I was entitled to. The lady at the Help Scheme arranged for someone to come round and a very nice fella called

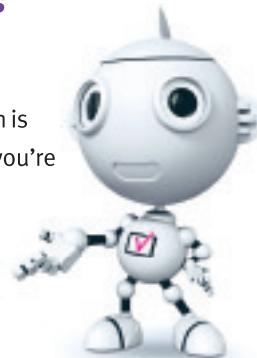


Alan came and set everything up for me. He even took time to show me how to use it. He explained that there were no hidden costs either. In fact the only surprise I got was when Alan showed me all the extra TV channels I could watch for free. When he finished at mine, he went next door to Peggy's. Although

she already had digital on her living room telly, she was still entitled to help switching one TV, so he sorted out the TV in her bedroom which she watches a lot.

The help continues

The help doesn't stop there. There is an aftercare service which is very reassuring while you're getting used to things. You can call up if you have any problems. So if you need a little extra help, it's there.”

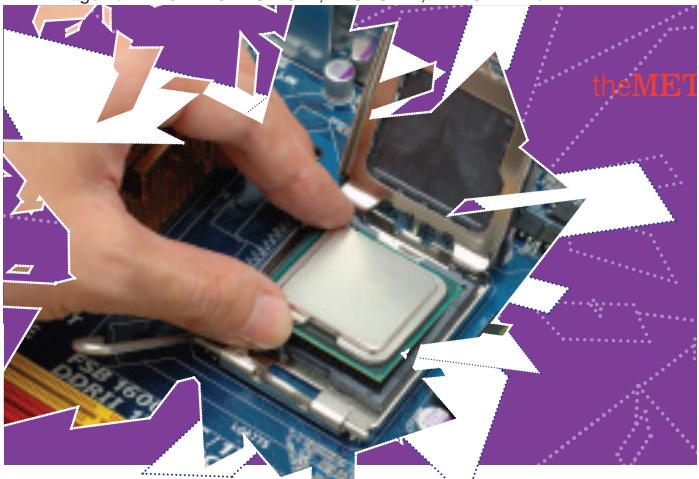


What should you do now?

Everyone who is entitled to help will receive an information pack from the Help Scheme. But if you'd like to apply now, you can call free on **0800 40 85 900** or visit helpscheme.co.uk

Jean is a fictitious character based on real customers who have expressed similar views.





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Waterfront parking cut

Parking spaces for the Walsall Waterfront development will be cut despite fears cars will clog surrounding streets.

A proposal to replace a 62-space twin deck car park with 32 spaces on a single level for the multi-million pound scheme have been approved by Walsall Council planning chiefs.

A total of 164 flats have been built and it was planned to have the 62 bay car park with other nearby spaces creating room for 107 cars.

But parking spaces for the flats are to be reduced to 79 after Caldmore Housing Association stated it only wanted 25 spaces for the 82 apartments it is taking up.

Seven letters of objection from nearby firms

and the Business Park Partnership stated the plans would bring parking problems in the area.

But developers Jessup is instead planning to install electric car charging points and a parking permit scheme for Charles Street.

It would enable business parking in the day and residential in the evening.

St Matthew's Councillor Mohammed Arif said he knew of businesses in the area which had already relocated because of parking issues.

But council leader Mike Bird welcomed the plans: "It sends a clear message that we are here to help developers wherever we can and Walsall is open to business."

Trial is fixed for benefits case

A woman is to stand trial accused of falsely claiming more than £36,000 in benefits over five years.

Joy Betteley, aged 43, of Autumn Drive, Pelsall, appeared at Walsall Magistrates Court last Friday. She denies fraudulently claiming income support and council tax benefits.

She is accused of claiming the benefits without declaring she was living with her husband Andrew Betteley. The case was adjourned and Betteley was given bail. A trial at Walsall Magistrates Court has been set for May 18 and 19.

Key date for new hospice

The keys to a new £5.5 million hospice in the Black Country have finally been handed over to staff – after 25 years of tireless campaigning and hard work.

St Giles Walsall Hospice is now expected to welcome its first patients within the next few months.

Bosses, who had hoped to be open in December, said they expected to be up and running in "late spring, early summer", with May highlighted as the ideal month.

Snags on the construction of the building in Goscole Lane and the bad winter weather have been blamed for delays.

The new hospice will cater to 12 patients and have 28 nurses.

Peter Holliday, St Giles Hospice Group chief executive, said: "I know this has been a huge length of time for Walsall Hospice. But this will be a community hospice offering the best possible care – one of the best in the country."

Desert driving ambition for boss Tony

The director of a Walsall skip hire firm plans to race across Africa's Sahara desert to raise money for a centre which treats cancer patients at a Wolverhampton hospital.

Tony Ellis, director of AB Waste Management, in Darlaston, is taking part in the 151-mile race across the desert in Morocco in aid of the Deansley Centre at New Cross Hospital. The six-day challenge, starting on April 1, could expose the father of two to burning 120C heat.

The fundraising drive for Mr Ellis has been led by Katie Bayliff, an administrator at the firm, whose mother Mandy Bayliff, aged 47, is receiving treatment from the Wolverhampton hospital for bowel and liver cancer.

Sponsorship from customers and colleagues has raised about £2,500 so far.

Mr Ellis, aged 44, of Shrewsbury, said: "I've never done anything like this before but I like the idea of this challenge."

Miss Bayliff, aged 25, of Corporation Street, Wednesbury, said: "My mum has had several operations and chemotherapy. She is now just waiting to get the all-clear."

Council manager on £24,000 theft charge

A Walsall Council finance manager has appeared before magistrates accused of stealing £24,750 from the authority.

Sandra Hook, aged 46, faced one allegation of theft by employees between January 31, 2008, and July 24, 2010.

The youth service manager, of Fairburn Crescent, Pelsall, entered no plea at Walsall Magistrates' Court and the case was adjourned until May 23 for Crown Court committal.



Skip hire boss Tony Ellis, who is taking part in the Sahara marathon

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Turning ban for drivers has been abandoned

Pupils hitting the right note



Pupils including Amy Reynolds, aged seven, celebrate the Gold Sing Up award

Children at a Walsall school are hitting the right notes to improve their learning and achieve a top national award.

Singing is used in lessons at White-hall Nursery and Infant School to help youngsters remember words and numbers.

It has been used in classes for more than a year, helping them to get the Gold Sing Up award which is part of the national music manifesto.

All 13 classes at the school in West Bromwich Road are encouraged to use

singing for educational reasons to remember key concepts. This could be rhyming numbers during maths.

It has been taken on by staff throughout the school and proved to be a success.

Musical co-ordinator John Palmer said: "When children are singing, they are actively involved, and it aids their memory."

"Every day, every child gets an opportunity to sing, and they love it. We have been working hard to obtain our award."

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Moves to ban motorists from turning across a busy Bloxwich junction have been abandoned following complaints.

Drivers travelling along Stafford Road from Cannock were to be stopped from turning right into Bell Lane under the plans.

But council chiefs have been forced into a u-turn after objections. It would have lead to diversions for drivers who faced having to cut through the Turnberry Estate or find other routes from the High Street.

However, cars going in the opposite direction from High Street are still being barred from going left into Bell Lane.

Roadworks have been in place over the last few months during work to improve pedestrian safety.

The work was due to be completed this week.

Transport chief councillor Tom Ansell said: "We thank pedestrians, drivers and traders for their patience during the much-needed work that has been carried out to improve pedestrian safety at the Bell Lane junction with Bloxwich High Street."

"As part of this scheme we advertised a traffic regulation order banning a left turn from High Street into Bell Lane and banning a right turn from Stafford Road into Bell Lane.

walsallchronicle@ expressandstar.co.uk

"Following objections, we changed the design to allow the right turn from Stafford Road to continue. An uncontrolled crossing point has been installed on the Stafford Road arm of the junction, just north of the junction, to allow pedestrians to cross."

Regulation

Councillor Ansell added: "They can also cross at the junction itself if they choose to do so."

The suggestion of a left turn ban attracted far fewer objections—therefore the left turn will be banned.

"The purpose of this is to help pedestrians who are crossing Bell Lane as their view of traffic making the left turn has been blocked by the pub. Drivers can use alternative routes via Elmoro Green Road or the Wolverhampton Road. Work is due to be completed by Monday, March 14."

It comes after the High Street was made a red route last autumn as part of work costing £1.8 million.

Transport chief councillor Tom Ansell said: "We thank pedestrians, drivers and traders for their patience during the much-needed work that has been carried out to improve pedestrian safety at the Bell Lane junction with Bloxwich High Street."

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NHS
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thechronicle

£7,000 theft teacher avoids going to prison

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A headteacher who took more than £7,000 set aside for children at a Great Barr school and spent it on her family has been spared going to jail.

Ann Regan bought fancy dress items for her stepdaughter's hen party with some of the cash taken from Hamstead Infants School between July 2009, and June 2010.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court last week, Regan was given a 10-month prison sentence suspended for two years for stealing £7,238.

Prosecutor Mr Julian Elcock told the court Regan visited websites to order items on behalf of the Tanhouse Avenue school and printed off web pages that detailed the cost of what she said she had ordered so she could claim the money back. In one transaction, 44-year-old Regan, of Moorfield Drive, Sutton Coldfield, submitted an invoice to the school so she could receive payment for items for her stepdaughter's hen party.

Ordered

She was rummaged when cameras she supposedly ordered on behalf of the school could not be found.

Judge John Wait said Regan, who earlier pleaded guilty to fraud had suffered "significant" punishment.

He said: "You have suffered significant punishment with the loss of respect and trust of parents and those you worked with, and the knowledge that you can never again work as a teacher."

Mr Nicholas Berry, for Regan, said his client started making the "orders" after getting into difficulty with loan and credit card repayments. He said she had paid back in the region of £5,000 to the school. Last week, parents of children at the Tanhouse Avenue school, said it was a disgrace the former headteacher had not been jailed.

Mother-of-three Louise Brookes, aged 28, of Hamstead Road, Great Barr, who has three children at the school, said: "She was constantly asking for money. She would ask for money for the school trips. If you did not pay then your child would not be allowed to take part." Production worker Lisa Price, aged 37, from Greenfield Road in Hamstead said: "She should be locked up. She is in authority and she has taken advantage."

Curry house pays for new kit

Football-mad youngsters at a primary school in Brownhills have been kitted out thanks to a kind donation from a curry house.

Brownhills West Primary in Shannon Drive was given £100 for a new football strip from Cardomon Spice, High Street.

Headteacher Stuart Cox was also invited to a meal at the restaurant and the customers added another £80 to the pot following a whip-round.

The generosity has helped the school buy new yellow and blue strips which will kit out both the girls and boys teams.

Mr Cox, who has been at the school for two-and-a-half years, said: "We wrote to all the local businesses asking for help to finance the kit and Cardomon Spice came back with a donation of £100.

We are so grateful to all the staff and customers for their help. The pupils are chuffed to bits with the new kit as the old one was falling apart.

They will wear it for the first time next week. They are already doing well in the leagues so hopefully this will give them even more of a boost."



Brownhills West Primary School pupils with the new kits back from left, Elisha Garner, aged 11, Harry Worsey, 10, front left, Dannielle Pinches, nine and Jack Shears, 10.

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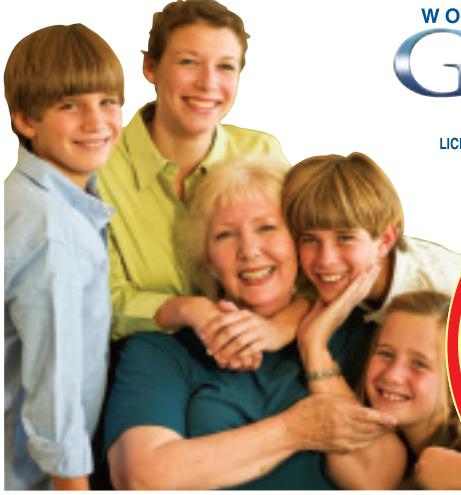
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thechronicle

School group leaves in rent row

Swimming clubs, gym members and martial arts groups have been left in limbo after a community association revealed it would no longer be running facilities at a Walsall school.

Frank F Harrison Community Association says high rent means it can no longer manage facilities at Frank F Harrison Engineering College. It is moving out from April 8 after 35 years, which could lead to job losses among full and part-time staff.

The head at the Leamore Lane school, Jacqui Grace, said it was "open to negotiations" with groups who may want to make arrangements to continue using the facilities.

Bruce Bennett, community association

development manager, said there was a risk that the move over to its current administrative offices in Beechdale could put some of its 50 to 60 full and part-time jobs in jeopardy.

"In light of the required rental demands, the community association is unable to continue sustainable delivery of services from the Leamore Lane site."

Construction

"Consequently, the managing board of the association have reluctantly decided to relinquish the management responsibility for on-site delivery after more than 35 years of service to the community and support for the Frank F. Harrison School.

"It will make a difference to staffing at the association as we have to think about the long term sustainability of it."

Some services will be run at other locations, such as construction skills training at Beechdale Lifelong Learning Centre and Dudley Fields Youth Centre.

An older people's lunch club, which meets at the college twice a week, will relocate to Beechdale.

Headteacher Ms Grace said groups might want to continue to use the facilities, which include swimming and a gym.

"This is a decision made by the community association, not the school," she added.

Tip us off appeal by police

Residents in Walsall are being encouraged to pass on information about criminals in their area as part of a new "Rat on a Rat" campaign.

Police in Coalpool want people to become the eyes and ears of their communities and share details on any criminal activity.

The Rat on a Rat campaign has been launched as part of the three-month long Operation Intrusive to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Any information received from the public can lead to search warrants and a number of searches have been carried out.

Sgt Jim Nixon, of the Coalpool Neighbourhood Team, said: "Members of the public are our eyes and ears.

"They have access to so much valuable local information."

To report a crime, call 0345 113 5000 or Crime-stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

C'mon feel the noise in school, Sir

Slade star Noddy Holder returned to the classroom in his home town of Walsall – and revealed it's where he could have spent his career if it wasn't for music.

The 64-year-old admitted he was keen on becoming a teacher before he found fame as a singer with the rock band.

He got the chance to speak to teenagers at Alumwell Business and Enterprise College about careers such as music and the media.

Noddy, who attended the former TP Riley School in Bloxwich, talked to a class of Year 8 pupils for around an hour.

It included discussions about different jobs

within industries which can range from being in front of a camera to

stylist and youngsters were

encouraged to work hard to reach

their ambitions.

Noddy, who grew up in Beechdale, was one of a number of celebrities taking part in teaching

as part of Teach First week.

The singer said: "I was going to be a teacher if I wasn't a musician.

I would have loved it, I would have

wanted to teach history. I always



Noddy Holder talks to students at Alumwell Business and Enterprise College, Walsall.

Emily Shade, aged 13, said: "When he walked into the room I didn't know what to expect."

"I had heard of him because of the Christmas song and he was very nice. He told us to always follow our dreams."

Asim Ali, 13, said: "The first I had ever heard of him was on Monday. I found him interesting and he knew what he was talking about. He told us if we work hard we can get where we want to be."

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Sowing the seeds for herb collection

It's a busy time for vegetables and herbs as there are plenty of seeds to be sown including Broad beans, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, leeks, onion sets, rocket, spinach, spring onions and turnip.

Select your family's favourites and remember that some, including carrots and rocket, can also make decorative edges to flower borders or can be grown in pots on the patio.

Some people sow broad beans in pots or tray cells during March so they have well established seedlings to plant outside in April. For those people who are not quite so well organised, it's time to plant out seeds directly in the soil where they are going to crop.

As with all vegetable crops you should dress the area with Miracle-Gro Fruit & Vegetable Plant Food or Growmore before sowing the seeds in double rows, 20cm (8in) apart.

Leave a 60cm gap between the double rows to give plants space to fill out.

Brussels sprouts, cauliflowers and cabbage are best started from seed in half trays of Miracle-Gro Seed & Cutting Compost. Cover the seed with a thin layer of compost and place inside a polythene bag to ensure a moist atmosphere.

Germinate

The planted tray can then be kept indoors on a windowsill or outdoors on a warm patio until they germinate. When the seedlings have grown the first two leaves, transplant into individual pots of Multi-Purpose Compost. They will be ready for planting in the soil in May and will appreciate firm planting in an enriched garden soil.

Salad leaves now come in all shapes, sizes and flavours. Cut-and-come-again loose leaf lettuce such as Lollo Rossa are

TOPICAL TIP
Watch out for a spring attack from slugs and snails that are hungry enough to devour all fresh young growth. A thin scattering of Sluiceway Advanced Pellets will protect new seedlings.

usually found in mixed packets along with mizuna, salad rocket, red mustard and greek cress. When combined together they add real zingy flavours to salads.

Sow a short row of mixed seeds every two weeks in a sunny spot in the garden to provide tasty leaves for the summer.

The grow-your-own phenomenon has spread beyond a few tomatoes and lettuce in Planters and potatoes in Gro Sacs. Our TV chefs now use herbs in almost every dish and experiment with different tastes and culinary uses of vegetables and fruit.

Sowing seeds in compost is the easiest way to start your own herb collection and you can find packets of basil, coriander, chives and parsley at your local gardening outlet.

You could grow all four in one Herb Planter on a windowsill or in a warm spot on the patio. Specialist seedsmen have introduced some exciting variations such as Basil 'Aristotle' (T&M) that produces an 'ornamental edible' that eventually forms a compact mound of miniature leaves with a delicious 'greek' aroma. It's great for pots on the windowsill or on the patio. Coriander 'Confetti' has fern-like leaves that look like carrot foliage, said to be sweeter than normal coriander.

Some herbs like sage, thyme and rosemary are best bought as small pot plants that can form the core of any herb collection. Planted together in a large decorative pot filled with Levington John Innes No2 the roots will appreciate the good drainage.

Find a sunny spot by your back door and these herbs will be in second heaven.

Lawn is in need of boost to roots



Feed the lawn now for a perfect picnic venue

Certain fruits need generous feeding

OUT in the fruit garden it's time to feed gooseberries, redcurrants, apples and pears with a general fertilizer such as Osmocote or Miracle-Gro Fruit & Vegetable Plant Food.

Similarly the fast growing fruit such as blackcurrants, loganberries, blackberries and raspberries will all need some generous feeding so that they can give of their best.

Once the fertilizer is down add a mulch layer of Levington Water

After a really cold winter laced with plenty of heavy rainfall and a relatively long period under snow, lawns in most areas of the country are looking a sorry sight.

Grasses have turned to a pale green colour verging towards yellow and some are showing brown patches of fusarium disease.

What lawns need now is a boost to the roots to encourage new strong growth and a change of colour from dull yellow to a rich vibrant green.

A high nitrogen feed will work miracles, especially if you fork the area of any brown patches before treatment.

Spiking areas that could be infected by disease will improve drainage and help to halt their spread.

After you have cut your lawn in April apply a tonic such as EverGreen Cut & Feed to the grass and you will notice the grass turns visibly greener in just three days.

If your lawn is infected by moss and broadleaved weeds then you could wait until the

Saving Decorative Bark to help suppress weeds and aid moisture retention.

Strawberries will be developing new leaves which are soft, tender and an ideal home to aphids. Control these with a spray of Bug-Clear Gun! for Fruit & Vegetables.

Hard frosts can damage the open blooms of strawberries preventing them from turning into fruit. When your fruit is in flower cover them with newspapers on frosty nights to reduce damage.

Time for hanging baskets

IF YOU have a conservatory or cold greenhouse it's time to plant up hanging baskets and patio pots using your own seedlings or small plants bought from your local garden centre.

Select colours that match and you can create a delightful combination of blending colours that will please the eye. Go for contrasting hues and you will attract more interest for your bold use of colour.

Whatever you choose from the garden centre displays of trailing verbena, fuchsia, petunia or geraniums plant them in containers of fresh Miracle-Gro Moisture Control Compost. This the ultimate compost for maximum results.

If the soil in your garden isn't acid then it can be difficult to keep

TIMELY TIPS

Once rhododendrons have finished flowering, snap off seed heads so that new shoots that will carry next year's blooms are encouraged.

rhododendrons, azaleas and other ericaceous plants thriving.

After they have been established for a year, you will need to feed these pots with a special plant food to ensure they keep on blooming vigorously and the leaves stay dark green.

Now these plants are in full leaf start feeding every couple of weeks with Miracle-Gro Azalea, Camellia and Rhododendron Plant Food.

If a regular feeding regime once a fortnight is difficult to manage, invest instead in slow release granules with the same name. Just mix these granules during spring into the top inch of compost in the pot and water with rain water. One application will feed all season supplying balanced nutrients plus magnesium and extra iron.

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See us online at www.expressandstar.com/starextratravel

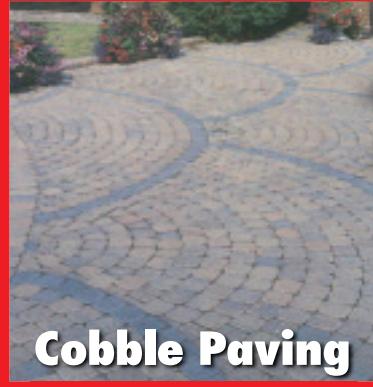
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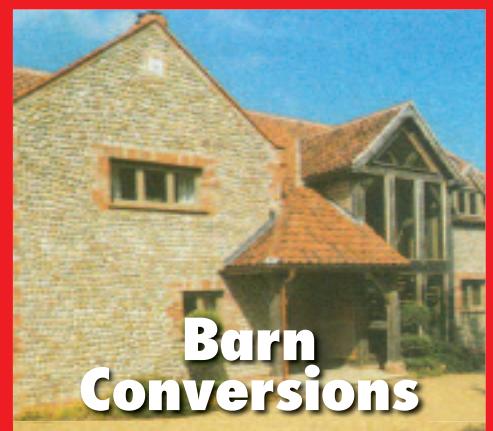
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snappers claim to frame



This scene was taken on Pelsall Common by Terry Gnosill of Pelsall.

This week's snaps are another mixed bag from local photographers and although spring is almost here, they are reminders of the wintry spell we had earlier this year.



Path to High Heath, Pelsall, Walsall taken by Brian Morgan of Shelfield.



This is Aldridge near the road to Lodge Farm also taken by Brian Morgan.



Wintery trees snapped by Michael Cocken of the Arboretum Users Group.

Snaps of life in the borough

Are you a snazzy snapper, a lord of the lens or diva of the digital print? Think you can do better than these pictures, if you can why not share your snaps of the borough?

There is no limit on the age or the subject all we ask is that they be as sharp and clear as possible and must be of reasonable quality for publication and of course feature some area or aspect of Walsall and its life.

Send them in with your name, address and contact number and a brief description of what the picture shows.

Also we would like to hear about any interesting tales or stories attached to the photograph. Send them in either as a hard copy or electronically and we will do the rest. So get those cameras snapping, dig out those dusty old albums and send them to: Snappers Claim to Frame, Walsall Chronicle, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES or email them to walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk.



A snow covered Pelsall Common, Walsall by Brian Morgan.

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Nick Clarke, right, with friend Robert Murphy at the Nou Camp, Barcelona



Nick, third right, and his mates paying tribute to Barca star Lionel Messi

From Glassa to Barca

From a non-league match on a cold afternoon to the glamour of a European tie – it is just another typical week in the life of Black Country football fanatic Nick Clarke.

He was in the Spanish crowd cheering on Barcelona in their clash with Arsenal in the Champions League last week – but insists his heart lies with Stourbridge Town.

The 23-year-old has season tickets for Stourbridge and Barcelona and tries to make as many home games as he can for both teams.

Nick, of Hagley, was one of the 90,000 supporters at the Nou Camp on Tuesday who saw Barcelona defeat Arsenal.

Opportunity

The quality manager at Clarke Transport, Oldbury, went on a five-day holiday with five friends and his brother Ollie.

They flew out the Friday before and were able to watch Barca beat Real Zaragoza 1-0.

A three-week gap in home fixtures at Stourbridge gave him the opportunity to spend some more time in the Catalan capital and he stayed for two matches.

He says: "It's a great experience going to the Nou Camp and seeing them play, but it's totally different to Stourbridge."

"But Stourbridge need our support and I'll always be behind them."

The Barca season ticket costs £380 and the Stourbridge one £110.

Each trip to Spain costs around £75



won our third European Cup." He is hoping the club will this year scoop their fourth European title in the final at Wembley Stadium.

Since getting hooked, he has joined a UK-based Barcelona supporters' club. While in Barcelona he joins up with fellow supporters in a pub and he says he enjoys socialising in the city almost as much as watching the football.

But at the weekend he was back with Stourbridge's travelling fans who saw the Glassboys lose 3-2 at Weymouth Saturday.

He missed the Glassboys' 2-0 victory over Oxford City the previous Saturday – which was attended by just 161 supporters, compared to the 70,000 that watched the Nou Camp for the game against Real Zaragoza.

Tiring

When Arsenal beat Barcelona in the first leg of their Champions League tie last month, Nick saw that game and a Glassboys match within 24 hours.

He cheered on Stourbridge in the Worcestershire Senior Cup semi-final which ended in a 4-0 win over Redditch, before flying out to the Catalan capital.

He added: "I can get tiring sometimes but we always have a good time and like to turn our trips into mini holidays.

"I used to watch Villa but I got fed up with the Premier League because it's all about money – that's why I watch Stourbridge. Barcelona is a different world but I love the atmosphere – and of course the weather is much better."

for travel as his accommodation is free, staying with friends he has made.

His support for Barca came when he and his father Bill attended a game at the Nou Camp in 2003.

He adds: "Unfortunately Barcelona lost 2-1, our first defeat against Real Madrid in Camp Nou since October 1983."

"Even though they lost I could not believe the atmosphere or the level of expectation compared to English football – it was fantastic."

"Following that I became hooked on

the city, the country and the lifestyle."

The visits to Barcelona became more regular in the 2006/07 season when he was aged 19.

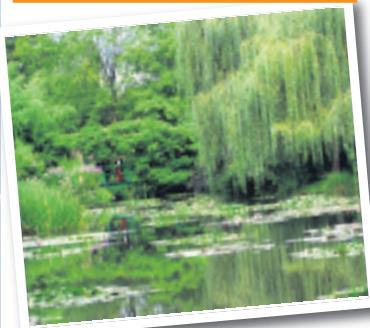
Since then he has been to at least 10 games a season for the past four years, and last season he missed only four home league games, as well as travelling to several away games and Champions League ties.

He says: "Over the past five years, I have seen Barca in Glasgow, Seville, Manchester, Madrid, London, Munich and most notably in Rome, where we

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Nick's match days

Stourbridge

1pm – "I arrive in Stourbridge and place a few bets at the bookies before making my way to the Mitre Inn in Lower High Street, where we meet a few of the Stourbridge barney army and have a couple of drinks prior to the game, mixing with both home and away fans."



2.30pm – "I head to the ground as it's a five to 10-minute walk from the Mitre Inn, and get a quick drink before the game and a chat with Steve Dimmock, the landlord of the ground's clubhouse, and any of the other Stourbridge fans who weren't previously in the Mitre."

3pm – "Watch the game, and stand behind the end Stourbridge are attacking, which tends to be the Shed End for the first half – a far cry from the Nou Camp."

3.45pm – "We get a pie and watch the half time scores and hope a few of our play-off rivals or teams down the number nine bus route to Birmingham – such as Lye or Halesowen – are dropping points."

4pm – "Get behind the goal at the Church End for the second half."

5pm – "Watch the full time scores and curse the bets we failed to put on, then have a drink in the club house with the players and managerial staff from both sets of teams. We will head back to the Mitre Inn, where we tend to stay until the end of the first evening match on TV, before heading home again."

Barcelona

Friday night – "One problem with supporting a Spanish team is that we do not know what day the game will be played until 10 days before – it could be a Saturday or Sunday any time between 7pm and 11pm."

"I tend to fly from Liverpool airport on the Friday night and have the night off with other members of my UK FC Barcelona Supporters Club."

Saturday morning – "On match day we tend to walk from an apartment we have hired – keeping well away from the tourist traps – and get some breakfast, before getting a metro to the Nou Camp and meeting local Barca fans and my Catalan Supporters Club, Toxicos FCB."

4pm – "We meet in the same bar every home game, which is named 'El Triplet' in honour of Barca's treble success in the 2008/09 season."

"We stay here until kick off. For the big games against teams like Real Madrid, there can be up to 250 in this small backstreet bar, of which usually 50 of us have a typical Spanish dinner like paella together with drinks, and sing predominantly pro-Barca songs."

The match – "We sit in the upper tier behind the goal in the corner of the Nou Camp, where the 40-50 Toxicos FCB congregate. It isn't quite like Stourbridge home games, as we can't walk round the ground to sit behind the end we attack. Away attendances are usually poor, with even Real Madrid only bringing at most 400 fans."

Post-match – "After the game, we usually go back to 'El Triplet' and have a quick drink before heading in to town to speak with my friends."

"When I first met them, they would ask 'When is your next match?' but nowadays, it has become more like 'See you at the next game'. Depending on what time we fly home the following day, we might head back to the city centre and carry on where we left off, before stumbling into bed, grab a few hours sleep and then get up early for a cab to the airport and flight home."

the pulse

These boys nose they are wanted

SINCE shooting straight to number one last year Britain's newest heart-throbs - The Wanted are set to cause a stir on their first UK tour.

Having spent the last 12 months touring Europe the boys are back doing something funny for money as they spearhead Comic Relief's official single.

The single, Gold Forever, marks a day in your life you will never forget and with their d e b u t release All Time Low topping the chart, last

August, the Brit nominees are set for many more memorable times. Their tour, which kicks off on Friday 29, will see them grace the Wolverhampton Civic stage on April 11.

After forming in an East London pub the edgy-pop band have started as they mean to go on, working hard but partying harder. Their rough and tumble energy and down to earth nature sets them well apart from the clichéd, ballad-singing boy band.

Tom, the eldest of the group at 22, said: "It is an absolute honour to be fronting the Comic Relief single.

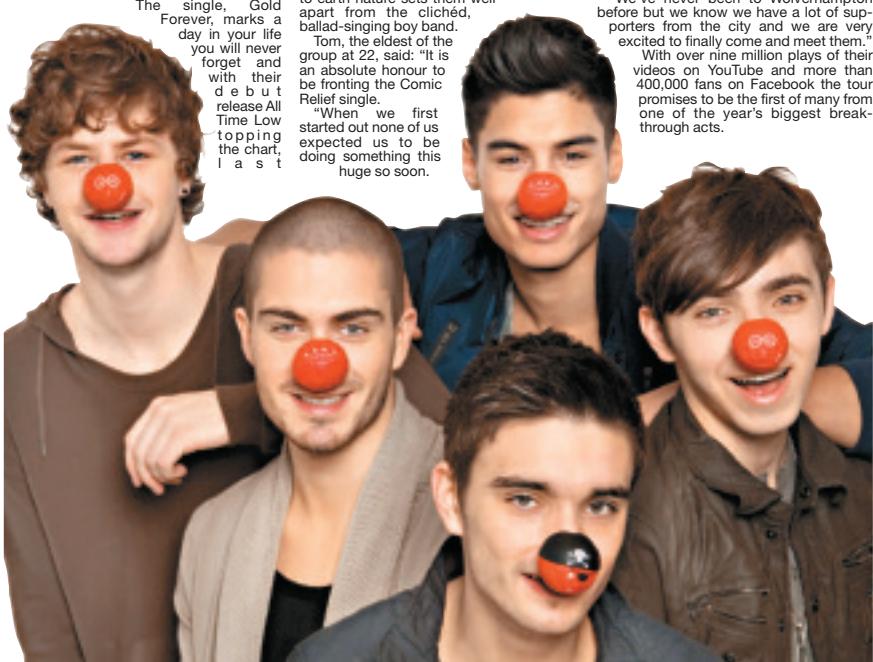
"When we first started out none of us expected us to be doing something this huge so soon."

"The fun we have definitely shows through in Gold Forever, we do something funny everyday and we love a good party. We hope everyone will back the single."

"We're not like your regular boy band, we don't want to conform to that stereotype and we want our fans to see the real us and enjoy a unique sound."

"We've never been to Wolverhampton before but we know we have a lot of supporters from the city and we are very excited to finally come and meet them."

With over nine million plays of their videos on YouTube and more than 400,000 fans on Facebook the tour promises to be the first of many from one of the year's biggest breakthrough acts.



Your chance to meet star Taylor

ONE of America's biggest new singing stars, Taylor Swift, is coming to the West Midlands next week - and The Chronicle is offering one lucky reader and a friend the chance to meet the four-time Grammy winner and see her in concert at the LG Arena.

The 21-year-old will be in concert on Tuesday (22) as one of only three concerts in the UK in support of her new Speak Now album.

Known for her incredible high energy shows, Taylor Swift will be performing hits from her three albums including the chart-topping Love Story, You Belong To Me, Fifteen and Mine, as part of her 15-month, 107-date world tour.

She is the top selling digital music artist in history, had the best selling album of the year in 2009 and regularly tops both pop and country music charts in America. All this in less than five years since the singer, songwriter and actress from Pennsylvania made her debut.

● For your chance to meet the star and see her in concert at the LG on Tuesday evening, call us tomorrow (Friday March 18) on 01902 319571 between 10am and noon, and tell us the name of her latest album. The winner will be chosen that same day. We will require your name, address, email, mobile telephone number and date of birth. Anyone aged under 16 will have to be accompanied by an adult. Usual Chronicle rules apply and the editor's decision is final.



TV listings start
- page 32

YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING



Theatre and show round-up - page 31



Reviews and gigs - page 36

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the pulse

Golden celebration of life on the most famous street

BIRMINGHAM'S New Alexandra Theatre is taking inspiration from the longest-running TV soap with *Corrie!* from Monday to Saturday, an affectionate celebration of 50 years of Coronation Street which got its premiere in Salford a year ago.

Former Street star Ken Morley (who played supermarket boss Reg Holdsworth) is the special guest narrator for the show, which recalls celebrated scenes from the soap's half century and was written by one of the show's scriptwriters, Jonathan Harvey.

The cast of six will take on several roles each to play such familiar characters as Ena Sharpe, Elsie Tanner, Hilda Ogden, Bet Lynch, Jack and Vera Duckworth, Ken and Deidre Barlow, murderous Richard Hillman and trouble-prone Steve McDonald.

Roald Dahl fantasy for children *George's Marvellous Medicine* continues at the Alex to Saturday and then former Supremes Mary Wilson will appear as part of a classic soul double bill with The Chit-Lites at the theatre this Sunday night.

Movie musicals reign supreme at Birmingham Hippodrome

where *Footloose*, *The Dance*

Musical is followed by *The Blues Brothers* for a six day run from Monday. No sooner has former Busted singer Matt Willis stomped his last on the Hippodrome stage on Saturday in the celebration of 1980s music, than the clock turns back to the sounds of 1960s R&B in the show with the incredibly long title, *The All New Original Tribute To The Blues Brothers The Smash Hit Musical*. The suited and pork pie-hatted duo and some soulful guest singers will be belting out the sounds of Chicago and Detroit until Saturday in the show inspired by the cult 1980 movie from director John Landis.

After Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company's production of Disney's *High School Musical* completes its run at Wolverhampton Grand on Saturday, the Lichfield Street theatre hosts *The Russian*



Left: The Russian State Ballet in action – the world-famous company can be seen at Wolverhampton Grand; above, Jo Mousley as the unforgettable Hilda Ogden in *Corrie!* at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre; and below, a scene from The Blues Brothers The Smash Hit Musical, which is running at Birmingham Hippodrome for six days from Monday

State Ballet and Orchestra of Siberia. They perform The Nutcracker on Sunday (at 4pm), Romeo And Juliet on Monday evening and Swan Lake on Tuesday evening.

On Wednesday at the Grand songs from the shows, with particular attention to Les Misérables, will be performed by West End singers in *Beyond The Barricade* and on Thursday (24) Opera Delta Luna perform Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operetta *HMS Pinafore*.

Sequel

Mind The Gap present an award-winning adaptation John Steinbeck's classic 'Great American Depression' drama *Of Mice And Men* at Wolverhampton's Arena twice today (Thu). Nobody's Perfect present the comedy *World Of Pain*, Rugeley writer Phil Preece's sequel to his



House Of Pain, tomorrow (Fri). Birmingham Rep, now on the road whilst its theatre is partly rebuilt, comes to the Arena on Monday with Lucy Caldwell's powerful new play about a dying child, *Notes To Future Self*. The play, the last directed for the Rep

by outgoing artistic director Rachel Kavanaugh, won critical acclaim during its recent run in Birmingham.

Crescent Theatre presents Tennessee Williams' US Deep South drama *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* at the theatre on Sheepcote Street in Birmingham from Saturday to March 26.

Orchestra

St Patrick's Day is marked by veteran Irish music greats *The Dubliners* tonight (Thu) at Birmingham Town Hall. Other concert highlights in the second city include English folk from *Kate Rusby* (Town Hall, Friday); Hollywood legend *Asha Bhosle* with sitar virtuoso Shujaat Khan (Symphony Hall, Friday); *The Australian Pink Floyd Show* (Symphony Hall, Monday); theatrical 10-piece performance orchestra *The Irrepressibles* (Town Hall, Tuesday);

and jazz singer *Clare Teal* performs songs from the Great British Songbook with the BBC Big Band on Friday, March 15, at the Town Hall.

Get ready for a long night at Dudley Concert Hall when veteran comedian *Ken Dodd* holds court on Saturday night, or head over to Stourbridge Town Hall for a Command Performance by spoof variety veteran *Count Arthur Strong*.

Pole-dancing girls, night out comedy *The Naked Truth* features Emmerdale's Claire King, former West End *Hairspray* star Leanne Jones, Maureen Nolan and ex-Liberty X singer Michelle Heaton, and is at Stoke's Regent Theatre from Wednesday to the following Saturday. It then visits the Alex on April 26 and 27.

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9.00 Breakfast 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live 10.45 Raymond Blanc Kitchen Stories (F) 11.00 BBC News, Regional News: Weather 11.15 Football Focus 11.45 Question of Sport (F) 12.00 Saturday TV (F) 12.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union Ireland v England (Midfielder John Inverdale presents coverage of this evening's decisive match at the Aviva Stadium Dublin)

12.30 BBC News: Football - News & Weather 12.45 Live Six Nations Rugby Union France v Wales (Mid-off 745pm). Gally-Lynn presents coverage of the final match of the year's championship, staged at the Stade de France in Paris.

13.00 The National Lottery: Saturday Night Drawn. Jenny Falconer presents the all-national Lotto, Thunderball and Lotto Plus draws.

13.30 BBC News: Weather 13.45 Breakfast of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of today's Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Bolton Wanderers and Tottenham Hotspur v West Ham United. National Lottery Update.

14.00 The Football League Show. Highlights and all the goals from today's fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Millwall v Cardiff City at the New Den; Wetherby vs

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9.00 Breakfast. **9.15** Watch of the Day. (F) 9.20 **The Andrew Marr Show**. **9.30** The Big Questions. **9.45** County Radio. **9.55** The Politic. **10.00** EastEnders. **10.20** Weekend Link. **10.30** Bargain Hunt. **10.45** Come to the Rescue. (F) **10.55** Letters. **11.00** Songs of Praise. **11.30** BBC News; Region; News; Weather.

9.00 **High Court's Shaggy Separates**. **9.15** Inspector T. **9.20** The Queen's Gambit. **9.25** Still Fasta and a quick Kenna. (F)

9.30 **The Best That They've Seen**. Guy Martin weaves his own bedsheet. (F)

9.30 **Countryfile**. Julia Bradbury and Jules Hudson visit the Lake Wyrmwood Estate in Powys.

9.30 **Audience Roundabout**. More solutions from Sabine, West Yorkshire. **9.45** **Yelling the Dead**. Part one of two. A missing woman is found brutally murdered.

9.50 **BBC News: Regional News: Weather**.

9.55 **Cards Filled By My Heart**.

9.55 **Memorable moments** from this year's fundraising event.

10.00 **Stand Up for Comedy**. **10.15** **Three**. **10.30** **Comedians learn to be stand-up comedians**.

10.30 **Regional Programme**. **10.45** **From the ITV Box: Super League Show**. Action from the latest Super League matches.

11.00 **Felicity Perin**. (F) **11.15** **Lead Balloon**. (F) **11.30** **Sign Hailie**. **11.45** **Faulkner Fiction**. (F) **11.55** **Holy City**. (F) **12.05** **Romancing the Stone: The Golden Age of British Sculpture**. (F) **12.30** **BBC News**.

9.00 **CBeckies**. **9.15** **CBBC**: **9.20** **Something for the Weekend** with Paul Whitehouse, Charlie, Hugo and Chris O'Dowd. **9.30** Film 2011 with Claudia Winkleman. **9.45** **Diagnose Murder**. **10.00** **Flim: The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp**. (1943) **10.15** **Film: The Red Shoes**. (1948) **10.30** **Space 1991**. (F)

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9.00 **Live Euro GP: MotoGP**. Robert Ricci presents coverage of the Qatar Grand Prix at the Local International Circuit in Doha, where the opening race of the season takes place.

9.00 **Top Gear: Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May test-drive cars in Romania**, as they search for a mountain highway built by the country's former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. (F)

9.00 **Wonders of the Unknown**. How gravity influences events across the universe.

9.00 **Break of the Day**. **9.15** **Marketing Highlights**. **9.20** **Check it: Manufacturer** Guide.

9.00 **McGeddon World Cup Highlights**. Kenya, Zimbabwe and India v West Indies.

9.00 **MotoGP**. (F) **9.15** **Film: The Blue Tower**. (2008) **9.30** **BBC News**. **9.45** **The Super League Show**. **9.55** **Clothes**.

9.00 **CTV: Mini CTV**. **9.15** **CTV: Star May the Bed House Wins**. **9.20** **House Guests**. (F) **9.30** **Big Morning Sunday**. **9.45** **Dinner Date**. (F) **10.00** **TV Movie: Weather**. **10.15** **Film: Columbus**. **10.30** **Death Early**. (1974) **10.45** **Children's Choice**. **10.55** **Film: Folk and Friends**. (F) **11.00** **TV Movie: Folk and Friends**. (F) **11.15** **TV Movie: The Simpsons**. (F) **11.30** **T4: The Simpsons**. **11.45** **Film: Four in a Bed**. (F) **11.55** **Four in a Bed**. (F) **9.00** **Four in a Bed**. (F) **9.15** **Dad or No Dad**. Game show, with Noel Edmonds. **9.30** **Time Team**. A Leonardo da Vinci home with woodcut past.

9.15 **Harry Hill's TV Party**. Comic review of the week's small-screen highlights. (F)

9.30 **Drawbridge** **9.45** **Philip Schofield and Holly Willoughby** presenting the semi-final, as the four remaining celebrities battle it out for a much-coveted place in next week's final. The results can be seen at 9.30pm.

9.30 **Drama: Doctor Who**. **9.45** **It's Only Us**. The band perform their biggest hits and new songs for a studio audience.

9.30 **Drawbridge** **9.45** **The Sims 3**. Philip Schofield and Holly Willoughby announce the finalists.

9.30 **ITV News: Weather**.

9.45 **Lamb's Drama**. (F)

9.55 **Angleterre Ciné**.

9.55 **TV Movie: Blood Alley**. (1985) Action adventure, starring John Wayne. **9.45** **News: Weekend**. **9.55** **Film: Hellfighters**. (1988) Adventure, starring John Wayne.

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9.00 **The Zone**. **10.00** **ITV News Headlines**. **10.15** **Film: Highlanders**. (1983) Fantasy. Starring Christopher Lambert. **10.30** **ITV Nightcore**. **10.45** **ITV Morning News**.

9.00 **The Teletubbies**. (F) **9.15** **The Hobbit**. (F) **9.20** **The Hobbit**. (F) **9.30** **FIS Freestyle World Ski Championships**. **9.45** **Big Picture**. **10.00** **TV Movie: Weather**. **10.15** **Film: Columbus**. **10.30** **Death Early**. (1974) **10.45** **Children's Choice**. **10.55** **Film: Folk and Friends**. (F) **11.00** **TV Movie: Folk and Friends**. (F) **11.15** **TV Movie: The Simpsons**. (F) **11.30** **T4: The Simpsons**. **11.45** **Film: Four in a Bed**. (F) **11.55** **Four in a Bed**. (F) **9.00** **Four in a Bed**. (F) **9.15** **Dad or No Dad**. Game show, with Noel Edmonds. **9.30** **Time Team**. A Leonardo da Vinci home with woodcut past.

9.15 **Channel 4 News**.

9.30 **TV Movie: Islam**. The role of Islamic culture in British society.

9.30 **Cross Blue with Elio**. The dinner party challenge heads to Merton.

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9.00 **Champions Is the West History?** The contrasting fortunes of North and South America.

9.00 **Country House Reasons**. An 18th-century Georgian manor in south-west Scotland.

9.00 **FILM: Devil's Due**. (2008) Premieres. Gothic thriller, starring Jason Statham.

9.00 **FILM: Devil's Due**. (2008) Action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.

9.00 **Super Casino**. **9.15** **Your Sport**. (F) **9.30** **How Not to Decorate**. (F) **9.45** **Medic in Moments**. (F) **9.55** **Hann's Hotline**. (F) **10.00** **The Michael Show**. **10.15** **Thomas & Friends**. **10.30** **Pooh the Racing Car**. (F)

9.00 **FILM: Devil's Due**. (2008) Three US Mayday pilots have to prevent a malfunctioning computer-controlled jet from crashing a war.

Action adventure, starring Jamie Foxx and Jordi Lucas.

9.00 **FILM: Devil's Due**. (2008) Premieres. Gothic thriller, starring Jason Statham.

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the pulse

Monday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast, 6.15 Hair Hunter; 6.30 Home Under the Hammer; BBC News; Weather, 11.00 Britain's Empty Homes, 11.30 Cash in the Attic; BBC News; Weather, 12.15 Bargain Hunt, 1.00 BBC News; Weather, 1.15 Regional News; Weather, 1.25 Doctor, 1.35 Escape to the Country, 1.45 BBC News; Weather, Regional News, 1.45 CBBC, 1.55 Wedfest Link, 1.60 BBC News; Weather, 1.65 Regional News; Programme, Weather, 2.00 The One Show, 2.30 Bang Bang the Theory, BBC News; Regional News, 3.00 BBC Newsbreak, 3.30 The Big Build - DIY SOS, 3.45 The Big Build - DIY SOS: The Big Build - DIY SOS: The Big Build - DIY SOS, 4.00 BBC News; Weather, 4.15 Regional News; Weather, 4.30 BBC Breakfast, 4.45 Late Kick Off, 4.55 Flint & Arrow (1998); Weather, 5.00 BBC News Zone, 5.15 BBC Breakfast, 5.20 Remaking the Stone: The Golden Age of British Sculpture, 5.30 Life in Cottage Garden with Carol Klein, 5.45 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies, 2.00 CBBC, 8.30 CBeebies, 11.30 Meerkat Manor, (F) 12.00 Daily Politics, 12.30 GMT with George Alagiah, 1.00 Olympic Murder, 1.35 GMT with George Alagiah, 1.45 Royal Update, Downstairs, 2.15 Helicopter Heroes, (F) 3.00 Pointless, 5.15 Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is, 6.00 Endheads, (F) 6.30 Royal Update, Downstairs, 7.00 Doctors, 7.30 The National Lottery, 8.00 DIY SOS: The Big Build - DIY SOS, 8.30 The Big Build - DIY SOS: The Big Build - DIY SOS, 9.00 BBC News; Weather, 9.15 Bucket Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 10.00 The National Lottery, Wednesday Night Draw, 10.30 World Cup, 11.00 BBC News; Weather, 11.30 The One Show, 12.00 The Boat That Guy Built, 12.30 DIY SOS: The Big Build - DIY SOS, 13.00 BBC News; Weather, 13.15 Bucket Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 14.00 The National Lottery, Wednesday Night Draw, 14.30 Pointless, 15.00 Bucket Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 16.00 The Boat That Guy Built, 16.30 Remaking the Stone: The Golden Age of British Sculpture, 17.00 Life in Cottage Garden with Carol Klein, 17.45 BBC News.

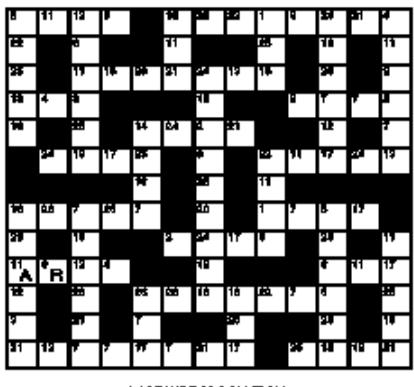
ITV1 6.00 Daybreak, 6.45 Lorraine, 6.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show, 6.30 This Morning, 6.30 Loose Women, 6.30 ITV News; Weather, 1.55 Regional News; Weather, 2.00 90 Minute Makeover, 3.00 The Alan Titchmarsh Show, 3.50 Regional Weather, 3.50 Midweek Murder, (F) 5.00 Saturday, 6.00 Regional News; Weather, 6.00 ITV News, 6.15 Royal Update, Downstairs, 6.30 Coronation Street, 6.45 The Lakes, 7.00 Coronation Street, 8.00 Law & Order: UK, 9.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather, 9.30 Newswatch; Weather, 11.20 Storyline - American Idol: Phoenix, 1.00 BBC Learning Zone.

Brain Gym

No.108

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

Z	S	U	D	V	Q	X	E	J	P	M	L	W
H	A	Y	R	N	G	K	O	F	B	T	I	C

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Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the five words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION
The letter
represents
the question
word is 'B' (Beehive),
Beehive, Wasp, all names of insects

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CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

QUICK CROSSWORD

CODEWORD SUDOKU

WORD PUZZLER

WORD SEARCH

NUMBER CRUNCH

SEARCH: DAILY EXPRESS PUZZLES
On the iPhone, iPod Touch & iPad

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Excellent start at school? (5)
- The cause of suffering, obscure, great care? (5)
- Has no meaning? (7)
- People may have to put up with her? (8)
- An element of jazz in classical music? (4)
- It's not so hot in this log? (6)
- Hut-like musical collar? (6)
- Agrees, but says nothing? (4)
- Is not right having more surplus? (4)
- Takes good steps not to have to walk in the streets? (7)
- Get from the health care about? (5)
- Your cards are thin, you don't want to eat them! (2,3,5)

Down

- In life ignorance may make one pickard? (6)
- Found the answer again, living deteriorated? (8)
- A king speech from one in business? (6)
- Abandoned part? (4)
- A performance team? (7)
- They presumably hope not to miss the post? (10)
- A chance one is fortunate to get? (5,5)
- Toller to many head bodesmen? (8)
- Scamp an aged gold club? (5,4)
- Afternoon service? (3,3)
- Without it one is utterly incompetent? (5)
- A thought the bald apparently conceals? (4)

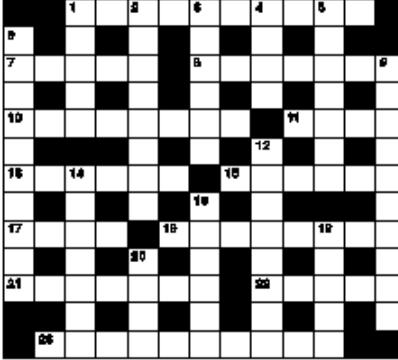
Quick Clues:

Across

- Arm (10)
- Bigote (5)
- Unkind (7)
- Admired (8)
- Just (4)
- Turn (5)
- Voluptuous (6)
- Supporter (4)
- Effigies of Clinton on the census (8)
- Ingredient (7)
- Guide (5)
- Excessively tatty (10)

Down

- Loft (5)
- Clickshot (8)
- Abrupt (5)
- Own (4)
- Trusting? (7)
- Spotless (10)
- Outfit (10)
- Follows (8)
- Encore (7)
- Fruit, flavor (6)
- Silliness (5)
- Thin (4)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
COTTAGE - A small house, often in the country, of Tudor, Jacobean, 16th Century, 17th Tudor, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, Victorian, 22nd Queen Anne, Queen, 1 Octave, 25th Year, 1st Floor, 2nd Floor, 3rd Floor, 4th Floor, 5th Floor, 6th Floor, 7th Floor, 8th Floor, 9th Floor, 10th Floor, 11th Floor, 12th Floor, 13th Floor, 14th Floor, 15th Floor, 16th Floor, 17th Floor, 18th Floor, 19th Floor, 20th Floor, 21st Floor, 22nd Floor, 23rd Floor, 24th Floor, 25th Floor, 26th Floor, 27th Floor, 28th Floor, 29th Floor, 30th Floor, 31st Floor, 32nd Floor, 33rd Floor, 34th Floor, 35th Floor, 36th Floor, 37th Floor, 38th Floor, 39th Floor, 40th Floor, 41st Floor, 42nd Floor, 43rd Floor, 44th Floor, 45th Floor, 46th Floor, 47th Floor, 48th Floor, 49th Floor, 50th Floor, 51st Floor, 52nd Floor, 53rd Floor, 54th Floor, 55th Floor, 56th Floor, 57th Floor, 58th Floor, 59th Floor, 60th Floor, 61st Floor, 62nd Floor, 63rd Floor, 64th Floor, 65th Floor, 66th Floor, 67th Floor, 68th Floor, 69th Floor, 70th Floor, 71st Floor, 72nd Floor, 73rd Floor, 74th Floor, 75th Floor, 76th Floor, 77th Floor, 78th Floor, 79th Floor, 80th Floor, 81st Floor, 82nd Floor, 83rd Floor, 84th Floor, 85th Floor, 86th Floor, 87th Floor, 88th Floor, 89th Floor, 90th Floor, 91st Floor, 92nd Floor, 93rd Floor, 94th Floor, 95th Floor, 96th Floor, 97th Floor, 98th Floor, 99th Floor, 100th Floor, 101st Floor, 102nd Floor, 103rd Floor, 104th Floor, 105th Floor, 106th Floor, 107th Floor, 108th Floor, 109th Floor, 110th Floor, 111th Floor, 112th Floor, 113th Floor, 114th Floor, 115th Floor, 116th Floor, 117th Floor, 118th Floor, 119th Floor, 120th Floor, 121st Floor, 122nd Floor, 123rd Floor, 124th Floor, 125th Floor, 126th Floor, 127th Floor, 128th Floor, 129th Floor, 130th Floor, 131st Floor, 132nd Floor, 133rd Floor, 134th Floor, 135th Floor, 136th Floor, 137th Floor, 138th Floor, 139th Floor, 140th Floor, 141st Floor, 142nd Floor, 143rd Floor, 144th Floor, 145th Floor, 146th Floor, 147th Floor, 148th Floor, 149th Floor, 150th Floor, 151st Floor, 152nd Floor, 153rd Floor, 154th Floor, 155th Floor, 156th Floor, 157th Floor, 158th Floor, 159th Floor, 160th Floor, 161st Floor, 162nd Floor, 163rd Floor, 164th Floor, 165th Floor, 166th Floor, 167th Floor, 168th Floor, 169th Floor, 170th Floor, 171st Floor, 172nd Floor, 173rd Floor, 174th Floor, 175th Floor, 176th Floor, 177th Floor, 178th Floor, 179th Floor, 180th Floor, 181st Floor, 182nd Floor, 183rd Floor, 184th Floor, 185th Floor, 186th Floor, 187th Floor, 188th Floor, 189th Floor, 190th Floor, 191st Floor, 192nd Floor, 193rd Floor, 194th Floor, 195th Floor, 196th Floor, 197th Floor, 198th Floor, 199th Floor, 200th Floor, 201st Floor, 202nd Floor, 203rd Floor, 204th Floor, 205th Floor, 206th Floor, 207th Floor, 208th Floor, 209th Floor, 210th Floor, 211st Floor, 212nd Floor, 213rd Floor, 214th Floor, 215th Floor, 216th Floor, 217th Floor, 218th Floor, 219th Floor, 220th Floor, 221st Floor, 222nd Floor, 223rd Floor, 224th Floor, 225th 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Floor, 303rd Floor, 304th Floor, 305th Floor, 306th Floor, 307th Floor, 308th Floor, 309th Floor, 310th Floor, 311st Floor, 312nd Floor, 313rd Floor, 314th Floor, 315th Floor, 316th Floor, 317th Floor, 318th Floor, 319th Floor, 320th Floor, 321st Floor, 322nd Floor, 323rd Floor, 324th Floor, 325th Floor, 326th Floor, 327th Floor, 328th Floor, 329th Floor, 330th Floor, 331st Floor, 332nd Floor, 333rd Floor, 334th Floor, 335th Floor, 336th Floor, 337th Floor, 338th Floor, 339th Floor, 340th Floor, 341st Floor, 342nd Floor, 343rd Floor, 344th Floor, 345th Floor, 346th Floor, 347th Floor, 348th Floor, 349th Floor, 350th Floor, 351st Floor, 352nd Floor, 353rd Floor, 354th Floor, 355th Floor, 356th Floor, 357th Floor, 358th Floor, 359th Floor, 360th Floor, 361st Floor, 362nd Floor, 363rd Floor, 364th Floor, 365th Floor, 366th Floor, 367th Floor, 368th Floor, 369th Floor, 370th Floor, 371st Floor, 372nd Floor, 373rd Floor, 374th Floor, 375th Floor, 376th Floor, 377th Floor, 378th Floor, 379th 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Floor, 457th Floor, 458th Floor, 459th Floor, 460th Floor, 461st Floor, 462nd Floor, 463rd Floor, 464th Floor, 465th Floor, 466th Floor, 467th Floor, 468th Floor, 469th Floor, 470th Floor, 471st Floor, 472nd Floor, 473rd Floor, 474th Floor, 475th Floor, 476th Floor, 477th Floor, 478th Floor, 479th Floor, 480th Floor, 481st Floor, 482nd Floor, 483rd Floor, 484th Floor, 485th Floor, 486th Floor, 487th Floor, 488th Floor, 489th Floor, 490th Floor, 491st Floor, 492nd Floor, 493rd Floor, 494th Floor, 495th Floor, 496th Floor, 497th Floor, 498th Floor, 499th Floor, 500th Floor, 501st Floor, 502nd Floor, 503rd Floor, 504th Floor, 505th Floor, 506th Floor, 507th Floor, 508th Floor, 509th Floor, 510th Floor, 511st Floor, 512nd Floor, 513rd Floor, 514th Floor, 515th Floor, 516th Floor, 517th Floor, 518th Floor, 519th Floor, 520th Floor, 521st Floor, 522nd Floor, 523rd Floor, 524th Floor, 525th Floor, 526th Floor, 527th Floor, 528th Floor, 529th Floor, 530th Floor, 531st Floor, 532nd Floor, 533rd 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the pulse



Elbow in concert

Rocking to right Script

IRISH rock trio The Script, right, will be celebrating St Patrick's Day in Birmingham at the LG Arena tonight (Thursday) at a sold out show as part of their major venue tour. A more traditional Irish music night will be held in the city's Town Hall where veteran folk group The Dubliners will be playing tonight. The present line-up of the group is Barney McKenna, John Sheahan, Sean Cannon, Eamonn Campbell and Patsy Watchorn.



MANCUNIAN band Elbow have won critical acclaim for their fifth studio album, Build A Rocket Boys!, released earlier this month. The Mercury Music Prize winners, for their classic album, The Seldom Seen Kid, will be in concert at Birmingham's NIA on Tuesday, March 22, with support from Irish band Villagers.



Hello to Rumer on tour

SINGER Rumer, above, who had a platinum-selling success with her debut album Seasons Of My Soul, comes to Birmingham Symphony Hall on Tuesday, March 22, as part of her first tour of major venues. Her new single, a version of David Gates' Goodbye Girl, is released on April 4. Tickets for her concert are priced £23.50.

Footloose, Hippodrome, Birmingham

FOOTLOOSE exploded onto the stage with all the energy and excitement an 80s dance musical should have. Based on the 1984 film, the production tells the story of city boy Ren who moved to small town Bomont only to find that dancing was banned, and he wanted to bring it back.

The all-singing, all-dancing production, directed and choreographed by Olivier award-winner Karen Bruce, had everything from light-hearted humour to heartache and sadness which drew in the audience.

The show's big name, Matt Willis, from pop group Busted, as Chuck, fitted the role effortlessly, proving he is not just a pop star.

It featured classic 80s hits, including the title track Footloose, and a show-stopping performance of Let's Hear It For The Boys from Jodie Jacobs as Rusty.

The energy of the cast lasted from start to finish, and the show ended with a compilation of the biggest dance numbers which encouraged to whole audience to get on their feet.

Alex Wainwright

Joe Longthorne, New Alex Theatre, Birmingham
WEAVING his magic with a sensational class act, Joe Longthorne had his adoring fans in raptures.

A huge cheer greeted him on to the stage as the audience stood up to show their love for him. Clearly moved by the welcome, it was warming to see the emotion on his face, all the more poignant after his fight against leukaemia.

The TV show Search for a Star put him in the spotlight and made him a household name, not only as an accomplished singer in his own right, but also a great singing impersonator and comedian.

Let Me Try Again was a perfect opening song that pulled at the heart strings and created the atmosphere for the rest of his performance.

His endless repertoire of voices includes hundreds of the world's top singers. Frank Sinatra, Shirley Bassey, Johnny Mathis, Neil Diamond, Barry Manilow and Tom Jones were just a few delivered with uncanny accuracy.

There were tears of laughter for his hilarious impressions of David Dickinson and his Dickinson's Real Deal colleagues. Finishing with a moving rendition of Wind Beneath My Wings, the entire audience were on their feet and many taking flowers and gifts to the front for him to receive.

Les Jowett

The Wombats, HMV Institute, Birmingham

IT certainly did not backfire at the disco for The Wombats. The decision to start the night with a new song might not have been the best one, but following up this shaky start with Kill the Director soon got the crowds jumping.

The Liverpool lads gave an enthusiastic performance of old classics and songs from their long-awaited forthcoming album, This Modern Glitch, and it was clear how much their fans loved every moment as their waves of screams engulfed the room.

They ended the gig with a crowd-pleasing encore of their new single Anti-D and a performance of their first single Let's Dance To Joy Division, which had the whole venue singing along.

Alex Wainwright

Reviews

Richard Herring, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton
CONTROVERSIAL comedian Richard Herring played out his well-thought and deeply funny one-man show to a near-full house. Following up his hit show Hitler Mustache with his next sideways offering Christ on a Bike – The Second Coming, Herring hit the spot with his own brand of clever and witty comedy.

The show, which is more like a monologue, explores the thoughts of Herring as he struggles to understand the Bible from an atheist view, and the meaning of a dream which involved a bicycle race with Jesus.

The 43-year-old, most famous for his part in double-act Lee and Herring, is effortlessly funny as he strips Christianity to the bare bones in a show that is squarely aimed at the open minded.

He split his time on stage into two 45-minute slots, using the first to explain what gave him the idea behind the show, and the second to dissect the plot of his dream as well as the Bible.

His *piece de résistance* is something recycled from the original show, toured a full 10 years earlier, where he displays his intelligence and comedic ability by reciting the entire genealogy of Jesus, and still making it funny.

The likeable comedian supplied every seat in the house with a free programme packed full of witticisms and stories, which he promised to sign after the show, encouraged his audience to donate to children's charity SCOPE, which he has supported since 2003.

Jon Pritchard

Angelos Epithemiou & Friends, Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton

THE friends didn't show, and that's just as well judging by the photos Angelos showed of them on a big screen, particularly the one who hasn't blinked for three years.

Anorak-wearing, plastic bag-carrying Angelos Neil Epithemiou is a social misfit character created by Dan Renton Skinner, a creation who has found fame as a panelist and, more recently, score keeper on Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer's spoof TV quiz show Shooting Stars.

You probably wouldn't choose to sit next to Angelos on a bus but put him on a stage and you have nearly two hours of bumbling, mumbley fun, not bad for an act who boasts "three jokes and a dance".

He has problems with any word with more than three syllables – including Wolverhampton – and uses exclamations more suitable for a teenaged girl, OMG!

We did also get a glimpse of DJ Epithemiou, clad in Adidas and blasting out techno, though he took the pace down for his favourite song to play at funerals, If You Don't Know Me By Now.

The former burger van owner introduced us to his dog, Tinned Tomatoes, and expressed himself through the medium of dance. The anorak and 4ft-long tie were shed in favour of a silver lyra leotard for Mud's One Crept In and again, with the addition of a bushy tail, for Sweet's Fox On The Run. He left us with his words of wisdom "don't muck about" which, thankfully, is a maxim he completely ignores.

Leon Burakowski

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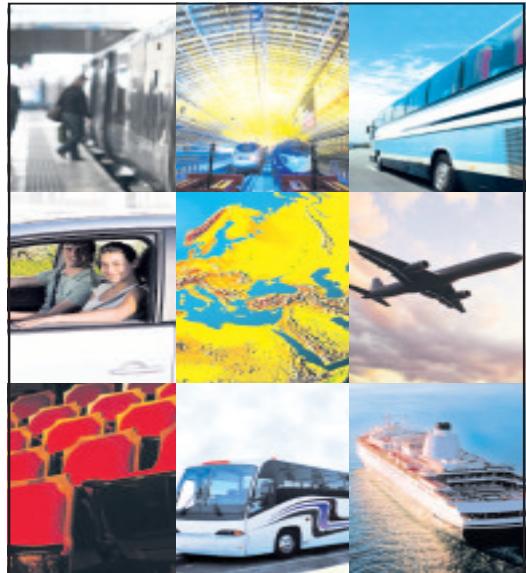
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The top property guide for Walsall, Brownhills, Aldridge, Willenhall and Bloxwich

An extended modern home on at £139,950

A n impressively maintained and extended modern semi-detached house has come onto the market in a popular and pleasant residential development in Willenhall.

Offers in the region of £139,950 are being sought by Marrion & Co estate agents for 28 Milestone Way in Coppice Farm.

Close to all amenities in nearby Willenhall and Bloxwich town centres, this two-bedroomed property has gas central heating, upVC double glazing, an extended and re-fitted dining kitchen, guest cloaks/WC, conservatory, re-fitted bathroom/WC, garage, ample off-road parking and an enclosed rear garden.

A tiled canopy porch with a uPVC double-glazed front door opens into a welcoming reception hall with a spacious front-facing lounge leading off. Measuring 14ft 6in x 10ft 3in, this room has a dado rail, ceiling coving, feature chimney breast wall with arched recessed niches, a pine timber fire surround with raised marble hearth and inset real flame effect gas fire.

In the refitted well equipped dining kitchen, which measures 19ft x 8ft 5in, there's a comprehensive range of traditional style cream base and wall

units, rolled-edged worksurfaces, a shock resistant single drainer sink unit with mixer tap, space for free standing cooker, integrated fridge and dishwasher, plumbing for a washing machine, useful understairs pantry, coved ceiling and upVC double-glazed French doors to the conservatory, which in turn opens out onto the rear garden.

The rear lobby gives access to an integral garage and guest cloaks/WC with a white suite.

Refitted

Upstairs, both bedrooms have a coved ceiling and built-in wardrobes, while the refitted bathroom includes a white suite incorporating a panelled bath with electric shower and screen, vanity wash basin, WC, ceramic floor and chrome heated towel rail.

Outside, the property is approached via an open plan lawned foregarden and Tarmac driveway leading to a single integral garage with an up-and-over door, power and lighting.

The enclosed private rear garden features a block paved patio and well stocked herbaceous borders.

For more information or to arrange a viewing, call 01922 404446.



This extended modern semi-detached in Milestone Way, Coppice Farm, is available via Marrion & Co.



The spacious lounge has a wooden feature fireplace with flame-effect gas fire and marble hearth.



A good-sized kitchen is one of the features of this house, situated on the a Willenhall development.

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The tree ferns at Tatton were among the first to have been grown in this country.



The Japanese garden at Tatton, with the Japanese lantern and steps.



The Fernery at Tatton, was designed by Thomas Paxton, back in 1859.



The pretty Japanese garden at Tatton, with the impressive thatched tea house.

Taste of the East in the heart of Cheshire

A good garden to visit, fairly near here is at Tatton, just up the motorway from Wolverhampton.

This is an old garden, which had become rather overgrown and neglected, but was left to the National Trust in 1958. Since then it has been reconstructed and is now run by Cheshire County Council, which leases it from the National Trust.

There are many old trees in the grounds, which extend to 50 acres.

There is a rose garden, designed by Lady Anna Egerton in about 1913, which is sunken and has many fragrant varieties of rose, together with lavenders, pinks and rosemary.

The Tower garden surrounds a folly, the tower, within a walled garden containing many unusual trees.

The Arboretum was planted from the begin-



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ning of the 19th century, and contains many conifers, including especially Japanese types, collected by the third Baron Egerton.

It was this baron who had the famous Japanese garden built, using Japanese workmen in 1910.

Pretty

The Japanese garden is now rather overgrown, as the plants have not been "bonsaied" like they would have been in Japan, but it is very pretty, and probably the best one in this country.

There is a thatched tea house, many Japanese shrubs, and a Japanese type lantern in the garden, which is delightful to walk around.

There were some beautiful Iris ensata growing there, which are typical Japanese flowers.

As I have seen many real Japanese gardens it did not seem quite right to me, but no doubt it misses the continuing ministrations of Japanese workers, who have a different way of doing things to British people.

It is possible to walk right to the bottom of the garden to the Leech pool.

This was put there to breed leeches in olden times, when they were used for blood letting. I wonder if there are still some in there?

Quite close to the house is the Fernery, built in the 1850s and designed by Joseph Paxton.

There is a superb collection of ferns, including some tree ferns, which were hardly known in this country at that time.

When they grew too tall they cut them down and just inserted the bottoms into the ground again.

There is something for everyone at Tatton, and well worth a visit in the summer.

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Heather Road
Bloxwich
● Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
● Open Plan Lounge
● Play Room/Games Room
● Conservatory
● Kitchen
● Dining Room
● Kitchen
● Family Bathrooms
● Garage
● Double Glazing
● Gas Central Heating
● Enclosed Rear Garden
● Utility with downstairs W.C.
In the Region of £139,950



Rothesay Way
Willenhall
● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
● Two/Three Receptions Rooms
● Conservatory
● Three/Four BedRooms
● NO CHAIN
● Refitted Shower Room
In the Region of £137,500



Field Road
Bloxwich
● Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
● Master Bedroom with En-Suite
● New Build 10 year warranty
● Fitted Kitchen with Integrated Appliances
● Downstairs W.C.
● Master Bedroom with En-Suite
● Bathroom
● Integral Garage
● Rear Garden
● Utility
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £129,950



Clockmill Mill
Pelsall
● Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
● Through Lounge/Diner
● Front & Rear Gardens
● Gas Central Heating
● Double Glazing
£124,950



Samuel Street
Bloxwich
● Three Bedroom Detached
● Through Lounge
● Kitchen
● Bathrooms
● In need of modernisation
● Rear Garden
● Driveway
In the Region of £119,950



Cypress Road
Walsall
● Three Bedroom End-Terrace
● Through Lounge
● Fitted Kitchen
● Utility
● Downstairs W.C.
● Bathrooms
● Double Glazing
● Gas Central Heating
● Enclosed Rear Garden
● Utility
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £119,950



Ashburn Grove
Willenhall
● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
● Double Glazing
● Gas Central Heating
● Front & Rear Garden
● Fitted Kitchen
● Off Road Parking
Offers in Excess of £115,000



Field Road
Bloxwich
● Two Bedroom House
● New Build 10 year warranty
● Lounge/Diner
● Fitted Kitchen with Integrated Appliances
● Downstairs W.C.
● Master Bedroom with En-Suite
● Bathroom
● Rear Garden
● Utility
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £109,950



Windrush Close
Pelsall
● Two Bedroom Apartment
● Lounge
● Kitchen
● Bathroom
● Communal Grounds
● Allocated Parking
● Popular Location
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £104,950



Buxton Close
Bloxwich
● Three Bedrooms
● Fitted Kitchen/Diner
● Double Glazing
● Gas Central Heating
● Side Passage
● Conservatory
● Front & Rear Gardens
● Kitchen
● Separate W.C.
Offers in Excess of £100,000



Dartmouth Close
Walsall
● Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
● Two Reception Rooms
● Conservatory
● Kitchen
● Separate W.C.
● Detached Garage to Rear
● Front & Rear Gardens
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £97,500



Bloxwich Road
Walsall
● Three Bed Terraced
● Through Lounge
● Kitchen
● Family
● Bathroom
● Downstairs W.C.
● Rear Garden
● Ideal for First Time Buyers
● Utility
● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £93,000



Tintern Crescent
Mossley Estate
● Three Bed Semi-Detached Property
● Two Reception Rooms
● Kitchen
● Bathrooms
● Separate WC
● Stand Alone Garage
● NO UPWARD CHAIN
Offers in excess of £90,000



Lancaster Place
Bloxwich
● Three Bedroom End-Terrace
● Quiet Cul-de-Sac Location
● Majority Double Glazing
● Gas Central Heating
● Side Passage
● Conservatory
● Front & Rear Gardens
● NO UPWARD CHAIN
In the Region of £87,500



Coalpool Lane
Walsall
★ Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
★ In need of modernisation
★ Investment/First time buy Opportunity
★ PRICED TO SELL
● Front & Rear Gardens
● Two reception rooms
● NO UPWARD CHAIN
In the Region of £69,950



Lichfield Road
Rushall
● Two Bedrooms
● Lounge
● Kitchen with appliances
● Family Bathroom
● Off Road Parking
● Communal Gardens
In the Region of £75,000



Station Street
Bloxwich
● Two BedRooms
● Lounge
● Kitchen
● Bathrooms
● Secure Entrance
● Allocated Parking
● Communal Gardens
● NO UPWARD CHAIN
In the Region of £68,000



Buxton Road
Bloxwich
● Two Bedroom Ground Florr Flat
● Lounge
● Fitted Kitchen
● Shower Room
● Electric Storage Heating
● Double Glazing
● Communal Grounds
In the Region of £63,950



Rockingham Close
Bloxwich
● First Floor Flat
● Two BedRooms
● One Reception room
● Double Glazing & Central Heating
● No Upward Chain
In the Region of £60,000

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CLARKES LANE, WILLENHALL

- Spacious Detached Home
- Double Glazing & Central Heating
- Three Good Sized Bedrooms
- Three Reception Rooms
- Side Garage
- Potential to Extend (Subject to Planning Permission)

OFFERS £169,995



DURSLEY CLOSE, WILLENHALL

- Improved and Extended Detached
- Three Bedrooms
- Three Reception Rooms
- Garage
- Off Road Parking for Multiple Vehicles
- Viewing Highly Recommended

OFFERS £154,950



PRINCETHORPE ROAD, SCHOLARS HEATH, WILLENHALL

- Modern End Town House
- Three Bedrooms
- Guest Cloakroom
- Full Width Dining Kitchen
- Parking Space for 2 Cars
- Viewing Highly Recommended

OFFERS £134,950



ALL SAINTS ROAD, DARLASTON

- Detached Home with Potential
- Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Two Reception Rooms
- Three Bedrooms
- Fitted Kitchen & Utility Room
- Detached Garage & Side Driveway

OFFERS £122,500



TAVERNS CLOSE, NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL

- Two Bed Semi-Detached House
- Double Glazing & Central Heating
- Fittt Kitchen
- Pleasamrt Gardens to Front & Rear
- Off Road Parking
- Ideal for First Time Buyer

OFFERS £114,950



RED BROOK ROAD, CAVENDISH PARK, WALSALL

- Modern Two Bed Semi
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
- Fitted Kitchen
- Rear Living Room
- Off-Road Parking
- Fore and Rear Gardens

REDUCED TO OFFERS £102,500



BLOXWICH ROAD SOUTH, WILLENHALL

- Three bedrooned end terrace
- Deceptively spacious
- Two reception rooms
- Spacious kitchen
- Utility room
- Extensive double glazing and central heating

Offers in the region of £92,500



PINSON ROAD, WILLENHALL

- Three bedrooms
- Recently refurbished
- Gas fired central heating
- Double glazing
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Off road parking

OFFERS £85,000



COTSWOLD GROVE, COPPICE FARM, WILLENHALL

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- Over 55's ground floor apartment
- One bedroom
- Electric storage heaters and Double glazing
- Attractive communal gardens
- Communal parking

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COBDEN STREET, DARLASTON

- Spacious Mid Terraced House
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- Basement Cellar
- In need of Refurbishment

OFFERS INVITED



GREENSLADE ROAD, WALSALL

- ★ Detached Bungalow
- ★ Two Bedrooms
- ★ Lounge & Kitchen
- ★ Utility & D/S WC
- ★ Garden & Garage
- ★ DG, GCH

£650pcm



GRENFELL ROAD, BLOXWICH

- ★ Semi-detached
- ★ Two bedrooms
- ★ Lounge/dining room
- ★ Re-fitted kitchen
- ★ Bathroom, Verandah
- ★ Double Glazed & GCH

£475pcm



CHARLECOTE RISE, WILLENHALL

- ★ Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- ★ Hallway
- ★ Kitchen, Utility
- ★ Re-Fitted Bathroom
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Gas Central Heating

£450pcm



HIGH RIDGE CLOSE, ALDRIDGE

- ★ Second floor flat
- ★ Choice of furnished or unfurnished
- ★ One bedroom
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Kitchen with white goods
- ★ Parking space

£425pcm



THE PINNACLE, WILLENHALL

- ★ Well presented Two Bedroom Apartment
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Fitted Kitchen
- ★ Family Bathroom
- ★ Lift & Staircase
- ★ Communal Parking

£400pcm



REEDSWOOD GARDENS, WALSALL

- ★ 2 Bed 2nd floor flat
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Kitchen, Utility
- ★ Two bedrooms, Bathroom
- ★ Parking space
- ★ Gas central heating

£395pcm



SLANEY ROAD, WALSALL

- ★ First floor maisonette
- ★ One bedroom
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Kitchen
- ★ Bathroom
- ★ Double glazing, GCH

£325pcm



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HOLDEN CRESCENT, WALSALL

- ★ One Bed Maisonette
- ★ Hall, Lounge
- ★ Kitchen
- ★ Shower
- ★ Bathroom
- ★ Storage heaters

£325pcm



GOMER STREET, WILLENHALL

- ★ First Floor Flat
- ★ One Bedroom
- ★ Reception Hall
- ★ Lounge, Kitchen
- ★ Shower Room
- ★ Gas Central Heating

£295pcm

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Chiltern Drive, Willenhall
Willenhall NEW



Well presented modern middle terrace which benefits from PVC double glazing and electric storage heating (where specified). Ideal for a first time buyer the property briefly comprises: Reception Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Conservatory, Utility Room, Shower, Downstairs, Front & Rear Gardens. **OFFERS AROUND: £109,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Broad Lane, Essington
Essington



OPEN TO OFFERS A two bedroom detached bungalow in a sought after location having the benefit of no upward chain and part UPVC double glazing. In need of some upgrading and refurbishing the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, rear garden and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £145,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Honeybourne Way, Kingfisher, Willenhall
Willenhall NEW



A three bedroom semi detached family home on the sought after Kingfisher estate having the benefit of double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. In need of some refurbishment the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, rear garden and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £100,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Fenmere Close, Park Hall, Wolverhampton
Wolverhampton



SOLD MUST SEE IMMEDIATELY! **OPEN TO OFFERS** A three bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. The superb family home is located in a quiet cul-de-sac. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, rear garden and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £169,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Rosewood Drive, Copse Farm, Willenhall
Willenhall



A three bedroom modern semi detached family home in the sought after Copse Farm estate having the benefit of upvc double glazing, gas central heating and quiet cul-de-sac location. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, dining room, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, master with en-suite shower room, family bathroom, front and rear gardens and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £141,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Ashburn Grove, Kingfisher, Willenhall
Willenhall



OPEN TO OFFERS A modern 3 bedroom semi detached family home in a popular estate having the benefit of NO UPWARD CHAIN, gas central heating and double glazing. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £115,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Arnwood Close, Walsall
Walsall



A good size 3 bedroom detached bungalow on a generous sized plot having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating, fitted floor and ceiling, front and rear gardens. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, kitchen, family bathroom, wood sized attractive year gardens and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £164,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Carlton Avenue, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton
Wolverhampton



NO STAMP DUTY An extended 3 bedroom semi-detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating, fitted floor and ceiling, front and rear gardens. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, kitchen, family bathroom, wood sized attractive year gardens and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £120,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Deansgate, Off Bowker Street, Willenhall
Willenhall



A modern 3 bedroom semi detached house on a 5% part buy to let rent basis. Being approximately one year old the property has the benefit of central heating, double glazing, NBC, granite tiled floors and gas central heating. Located close to the Black Country Retail Park the property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, spacious lounge, kitchen/diner, study, fitted kitchen, family bathroom, wood sized attractive year gardens and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £64,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Granville Street, Willenhall
Willenhall



** INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY ** LAND FOR SALE * PLANNING PERMISSION FOR 4 X TWO BEDROOM APARTMENTS ** OPEN TO OFFERS ** MUST BE SOLD ** OFFERS AROUND: £89,995
Viewing: 01902 633323

Lakeside Close, Willenhall
Willenhall



SOLD PRICE REDUCED! A 3 bedroom modern semi-detached home in a quiet cul-de-sac having the benefit of no upward chain, electric central heating and part double glazing. Located in a private driveway for just 2 properties this unique property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £65,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Eldon Street, Darlaston
Darlaston



A extended 3 bedroom detached bungalow having the benefit of no upward chain, electric central heating and part double glazing. Located in a private driveway for just 2 properties this unique property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £160,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Magness Crescent, Willenhall
Willenhall



Well presented, extended 3½ bedroom semi-detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating. It is a sought after location the property briefly comprises, fitted fitted kitchen, utility area, spacious L-shaped lounge, ground floor rear extension bedroom built on first floor, rear family bathroom with shower, garage, off road parking and rear garden. **OFFERS AROUND: £139,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Tyler Road, Willenhall
Willenhall



A well maintained three bedroom semi-detached family home benefiting from recently fitted carpets, fitted kitchen, utility area, spacious L-shaped lounge, ground floor rear extension bedroom built on first floor, rear family bathroom with shower, garage, off road parking and rear garden. **OFFERS AROUND: £89,950**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Gipsy Lane, Willenhall
Willenhall



Three bedroom semi detached having the benefit of UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, kitchen, lounge, bathroom, rear garden, off road parking and garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £109,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Harrowby Place, Willenhall
Willenhall



An extended 3 bedroom traditional semi-detached family home benefiting from gas central heating & upvc double glazing. Further comprising, porch, reception hall, dining room, extended L-shaped kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, off road parking and garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £104,950**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Treetops Drive, Willenhall
Willenhall



A three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, lounge, dining room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking for several vehicles and separate garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £129,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Evans Street, Portobello, Willenhall
Willenhall NEW



A three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, electric central heating and double glazing. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens and off road parking to front. **OFFERS AROUND: £99,950**
Viewing: 01902 633323

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Bentley Lane, Willenhall
Willenhall NEW



A 3 bedroom extended semi-detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. In need of some refurbishment and upgrading the property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, lounge, kitchen diner, 5 bedrooms, family bathroom, garage, off road parking, front and rear garden. **OFFERS AROUND: £105,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Temple Road, Willenhall
Willenhall



Offers invited on a two bedroom mid terrace house in need of some refurbishment and upgrading whilst having the benefit of double glazing, and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, ground floor shower room, two double bedrooms and rear garden. **OFFERS AROUND: £57,950**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Crawford Avenue, Darlaston



• 3 Bedroom Mid Townhouse
• Cul-de-Sac Location
• Gas Central Heating
• UPVC Double Glazing
• Offers Around: £94,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Princess Way, Victoria Mews, Darlaston



• A Modern 2 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
• Gas Central Heating
• Gas Central Heating
• Double Glazing (where specified)
• Offers Around: £115,000
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Taryn Drive, Primrose Gardens, Darlaston



• Link-Detached House
• 3 Bedrooms
• Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)
• Lounge with Feature Fireplace
• Offers Around: £129,950
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Cobden Street NEW



• A Surprisingly Spacious 2 Bedroom Mid Terrace
• Gas Central Heating
• Double Glazing (as specified)
• Dining Room with 'Ornate' Cast Iron Fireplace
• Offers Around: £92,500
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Hawke Drive, Hadley Heath, Willenhall
Willenhall



A well presented, extended & improved 3 bedroom semi-detached house in the popular Hadley Heath area. Having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, porch, large living room, kitchen with integrated appliances, dining room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking for several vehicles and separate garage. **OFFERS AROUND: £110,000**
Viewing: 01902 633323

Waddesbrook Lane, Wednesfield
Wednesfield



OFFERS INVITED A 3 bedroom semi-detached property having the benefit of NO UPWARD CHAIN, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with separate shower, front and rear gardens, garage and off road parking. **OFFERS AROUND: £134,995**
Viewing: 01902 633323

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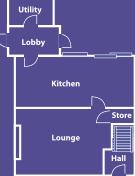


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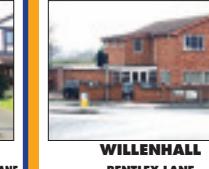
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 WEDNESFIELD LICHFIELD ROAD ★ Pleasantly appointed semi detached property ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Refitted bathroom with shower ★ Front and rear garden ★ Off road parking and garage ★ No chain £130,000	 WILLENHALL BEWLEY ROAD, OFF STROUD AVENUE ★ Spacious extended semi in popular area ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Large off road parking ★ Upstairs bathroom with shower ★ Garage and block paved driveway ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows Was £129,950 Now £124,950	 WILLENHALL, COPPIE FARM KINGFISHER GROVE ★ Modern size detached property ★ Four good size bedrooms ★ Double glazing and central heating ★ Two reception rooms ★ Conservatory ★ Lounge and dining room ★ En suite to master bedroom ★ Pleasant front and rear gardens ★ Driveway and garage £184,950	 WILLENHALL FARMHOUSE ROAD, CORNER BENTLEY LANE ★ Spacious modern style detached residence ★ Pleasantly appointed accommodation ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Water bathroom with en-suite shower room ★ Lounge and dining room ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows £175,000 NO CHAIN	 WILLENHALL BENTLEY LANE ★ Deeply spacious detached family residence ★ Extended side return ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Large off road parking ★ Upstairs bathroom with separate shower ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows £169,950 OFFERS, NO CHAIN				
 WILLENHALL MOUNT ROAD ★ Extended traditional style detached property ★ Gas central heating ★ uPVC double glazing ★ Three bedrooms ★ Conservatory ★ Fitted dining kitchen ★ Gas central heating ★ Off road parking ★ Viewing essential £120,000	 BENTLEY, WALSALL ATTLEE ROAD ★ Superb four bedroom extended semi ★ Gas central heating ★ Part uPVC double glazed ★ Block paved driveway £129,950 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL	 WILLENHALL TREETOPS DRIVE ★ Splendidly appointed and considerably improved semi ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Gas central heating ★ uPVC double glazing ★ Fitted kitchen inc. appliances ★ Refitted bathroom and shower ★ Garage and block paved drive £139,995 Viewing Essential	 WILLENHALL WILLIAMS CLOSE ★ Delightfully situated extended semi-detached property ★ Three bedrooms ★ Gas central heating ★ Part double glazing £144,950 OFFERS, VIEWING RECOMMENDED	 WILLENHALL FARBOOK WAY, SUMMER HAYES ★ Pleasantly appointed extended semi ★ Three bedrooms ★ Corner plot position ★ Two reception rooms ★ Superb UPVC DG conservatory ★ Gas CH + uPVC DG windows & doors ★ Block paved driveway £147,500 OFFERS VIEWING ESSENTIAL				
 WILLENHALL STONEHOUSE AVENUE ★ Splendidly appointed three bedroom link detached property ★ Two reception rooms ★ Superb uPVC double glazed conservatory ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Garage and block paved driveway ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows ★ Viewing essential £164,950 OFFERS	 WILLENHALL SUMMER HAYES PERTH ROAD ★ Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows ★ Fitted kitchen and bathroom ★ Utility room/downstairs wc ★ 30ft Garage and ample parking Was £174,950 Now £169,950	 WILLENHALL PEACH ROAD ★ Pleasant extended semi-detached Property ★ Conservatory ★ Two bedrooms ★ Lounge * Dining room ★ Kitchen and utility ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Majority uPVC double glazing £130,000 STAMP DUTY PAID	 WILLENHALL CHESTER CLOSE ★ Traditional style bay fronted semi ★ Off road parking ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ In need of modernisation ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Large rear garden ★ Excellent potential to improve £89,950 OFFERS NO CHAIN	 WEDNESFIELD HENFIELD CLOSE ★ Mid term house ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Three bedrooms ★ Fitted kitchen ★ L shaped lounge ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Off road parking and garage ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ No chain OIRO £89,995	 WEDNESFIELD THE GATE HOUSE, OFF PARK LANE ★ Unique detached ex Army barracks ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Three bedrooms ★ 2½ lounge ★ Guest wc ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Off road parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen and double glazing ★ Garage and block paved driveway ★ Wall mounted unit ★ Allocated parking ★ No chain £135,000 OFFERS	 WILLENHALL STONEHOUSE AVENUE ★ Pleasantly appointed dormer style semi ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Four/Five bedrooms ★ Two/Four reception rooms ★ Upstairs fitted bathroom with corner bath and separate shower cubicle ★ Lounge * Dining room ★ Kitchen and utility ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Majority uPVC double glazing £124,950 OFFERS	 WILLENHALL SUMMER HAYES PERTH ROAD ★ Pleasantly appointed dormer style semi ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Four/Five bedrooms ★ Two/Four reception rooms ★ Upstairs fitted bathroom with corner bath and separate shower cubicle ★ Lounge * Dining room ★ Kitchen and utility ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Majority uPVC double glazing £130,000 STAMP DUTY PAID	
 SUMMER HAYES EDINBURGH DRIVE ★ Considerably improved semi ★ External UPVC double glazed conservatory ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Large rear garden ★ Gas central heating £147,500 Offers - Viewing essential	 FALLINGS PARK THE GATE HOUSE, OFF PARK LANE ★ Unique detached ex Army barracks ★ Cul-de-sac position ★ Three bedrooms ★ 2½ lounge ★ Guest wc ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Off road parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen and double glazing ★ Garage and block paved driveway ★ Wall mounted unit ★ Allocated parking ★ No chain £147,950 NO CHAIN	 WILLENHALL LONGMORE Close, OFF BROAD LANE SOUTH ★ Pleasantly appointed modern detached residence ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Upstairs bathroom with shower ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows Was £210,000 Now £199,950 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL	 WILLENHALL MOSELEY ROAD ★ Pleasant improved traditional style bay fronted semi ★ Three bedrooms ★ Spacious refitted dining kitchen ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Upstairs fitted bathroom with corner bath and separate shower cubicle ★ Lounge * Dining room ★ Kitchen and utility ★ Gas central heating and double glazing ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Majority uPVC double glazing ★ Gas central heating £124,950 OFFERS	 SHORT HEATH POLES LANE ★ Attractive detached dormer bungalow ★ Three bedrooms ★ Fitted kitchen ★ Dining room ★ 2½ lounge with feature fireplace ★ Double glazing and gas central heating £230,000 OFFERS	 ESSINGTON FORREST AVENUE ★ Pleasantly appointed semi ★ Three bedrooms ★ Popular Essington village location ★ Gas central heating & double glazing £154,995 OFFERS	 COPPIE FARM, WILLENHALL GOREY CLOSE ★ Pleasantly appointed modern style semi ★ Two bedrooms ★ Gas central heating ★ uPVC double glazed windows ★ Upstairs bathroom with shower ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed conservatory ★ Internal viewing recommended £119,995	 WEDNESFIELD LONGMORE Close, OFF BROAD LANE SOUTH ★ Pleasantly appointed modern detached residence ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Upstairs bathroom with shower ★ Garage and off road parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows Was £210,000 Now £199,950 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL	 WILLENHALL THRESHERS DRIVE ★ Smart refitted three bedroom end town house ★ Gas CH + uPVC double glazed conservatory ★ Much improved accommodation ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows £108,500 NO CHAIN
 SHORT HEATH POLES LANE ★ Deeply spacious extended traditional style detached bungalow ★ Three bedrooms ★ Gas central heating, upvc double glazed windows £199,950 VIEWING ESSENTIAL	 WILLENHALL BRUNSLAW CLOSE ★ Ground floor maisonette and bungalow ★ Two bedrooms ★ Gas central heating ★ uPVC double glazing ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Double glazed conservatory ★ Bath room with shower ★ Garage and off road parking for several vehicles ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Allocated parking space £64,950 OFFERS, NO CHAIN	 WILLENHALL ALTON AVENUE ★ Spacious extended traditional style semi ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Upstairs bathroom with shower ★ Garage and ample parking ★ Pleasant rear garden ★ Fitted kitchen ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed conservatory ★ Internal viewing essential £139,950	 SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL COLTHAM ROAD ★ Pleasantly appointed traditional style end town house ★ Two bedrooms ★ Popular Short Heath location ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Fitted kitchen with oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows £84,950	 SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL COBBLE LANE ★ Pleasantly appointed traditional style end town house ★ Two bedrooms ★ Popular Short Heath location ★ Three bedrooms ★ Two reception rooms ★ Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob ★ Gas central heating ★ Double glazed windows £84,950				

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**WILLENHALL****GLAMIS ROAD**

- * Pleasantly appointed extended link detached property
- * Popular location
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * UPVC double glazed windows

£174,950 OFFERS**SUMMER HAYES, WILLENHALL****CARDIGAN DRIVE**

- * Pleasantly appointed extended semi
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * Double glazing

£132,950

- * Double length garage
- * Utility and store room
- * Block paved driveway
- * 22ft extended lounge/dining room

£97,500 OFFERS**NEW INVENTION****BRERETON ROAD**

- * Traditional style end town house in popular location
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * UPVC double glazed windows

£94,950 OFFERS NO CHAIN**RENUED****WALSALL****WOLVERHAMPTON ROAD WEST**

- * Spacious traditional style detached
- * Family room
- * Lounge and dining room
- * Generous rear garden
- * Internal viewing essential

WAS £189,995 £184,995 NO CHAIN**WILLENHALL****TILDESLEY DRIVE**

- * Pleasantly appointed improved end town house in popular development
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, UPVC

£124,950 OFFERS, NO CHAIN**NEW****WILLENHALL****RAVENS CROFT ROAD**

- * Spacious first floor in popular location
- * Pleasantly appointed throughout
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating

£76,995 OFFERS**NEW****SHORT HEATH****PIMBURY ROAD**

- * Pleasantly appointed traditional style semi
- * Two bedrooms
- * Block paved driveway
- * Majority UPVC double glazing
- * UPVC double glazed conservatory
- * No related chain

£75,000 CASH OFFERS ONLY

- * Pleasantly appointed double fronted semi detached property
- * Two bedrooms
- * Two reception rooms

£99,950 IDEAL FIRST TIME PURCHASE**RENUED****WILLENHALL****NOOSE LANE**

- * Three bedroom end town house property
- * Gas warm air central heating
- * UPVC double glazed windows
- * Rear garage

£79,950 No Chain

- * Lounge and dining kitchen
- * Downstairs wc
- * Internal viewing recommended
- * Ideal first time buy or buy to let

£78,950**IN TOUGH TIMES ...****Vernon Close, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Four bed detached **£199,950****Wrexham Avenue, Bentley** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£79,995****Parry Road, Ashmore Park** **SOLD STC IN 2011** One bed flat **£69,950****Ravenscroft Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed town house **£109,950****Aspen Grove, Short Heath** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed bungalow **£129,995****Manor Road, Oxley** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£124,995****Yale Drive, Wednesfield** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed semi **£119,950****Oak Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£134,995****Sandringham Ave, New Invention** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Four bed semi **£157,500****Birchfield Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed bungalow **£174,950****Hill Street, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed town house **£119,950****Lea View, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£125,000****Moathouse Lane, Wednesfield** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed town house **£89,995****Albion Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed terrace **£67,500****Larchmere Drive, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Four bed detached **£249,500****Hill Street, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed flat **£69,950****Bowness Gr., Coppice Farm** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Four bed detached **£229,950****Woburn Ave., Summer Hayes** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed bungalow **£176,500****Malvern Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£97,500****Ravensbourne Gr., Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed end house **£97,500****Sandringham Ave, New Invention** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£124,950****Mere Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£139,950****Cleveland Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£99,950****Croxley Gardens, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed semi **£114,995****Alvington Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£126,500****Spring Lane, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£129,950****Broad Lane North, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed detached **£179,950****Bute Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed dormer bungalow **£136,950****Bloxwich Rd North, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed detached **£139,950****Coventry St., Wolverhampton** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed detached **£90,000****Rochester Croft, Reedswood** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£134,950****Longwood Rise, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£139,950****Darvel Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed link detached **£145,000****Bentley Mill Lane, Walsall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£134,950****Ludlow Close, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed link det bungalow **£135,000****Sandland Rd., New Invention** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£102,000****Woodside Way, Short Heath** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed bungalow **£114,995****Ravenscroft Road, Willenhall** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed detached **£235,000****Kestrel Grove, Coppice Farm** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed semi **£116,500****Kestrel Grove, Coppice Farm** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed detached **£195,950****Lochalsh Gr., Coppice Farm** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Two bed det bungalow **£199,950****Chester Grove, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£89,950****Willow Grove, Essington** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Four bed detached **£254,950****Poole's Lane, Short Heath** **SOLD STC IN 2011** Three bed semi **£162,995**

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DoingMore...

Riverbank Road, Willenhall



£450,000

NEW

Five bedrooms, Riverpoint development, electronic gated driveway, conservatory, study, further office, gym room, landscaped gardens featuring entertainment area, planning permission for double storey side extension, lounge, dining room, fully fitted kitchen/diner, en suite to master bedroom, further family bathroom and benefiting from central heating and double glazing

Brownshore Lane, Essington



£237,500 **REDUCED**

Four bedroom detached offering spacious rooms and presented in immaculate order throughout, comprising cloakroom, lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen, ensuite, bathroom, front and rear gardens, garage and driveway.

Crab Lane, Willenhall



£210,000

NEW

A four bedroom link-detached home situated on the extremely sought after "Crab Lane". Also benefiting from a garage, further workshop and both an upstairs and downstairs shower room.

Cannock Road, Willenhall



£197,500 **REDUCED**

Modernised traditional detached home on a generous plot with large garden, bespoke conservatory and benefiting from no-chain. Serious offers considered

Mill Lane, Willenhall



£160,000

NEW

Three bedroom semi-detached is well worth viewing to appreciate the properties large gardens, briefly comprising lounge, dining room, guest wc, re-fitted kitchen, bathroom, central heating and double glazing and driveway

Coppice Farm Way, Willenhall



£177,995 **NEW**

A three bedroom detached home situated on Coppice Farm comprising lounge, extended L shaped kitchen/diner, guest cloakroom, utility room, bathroom, garage, driveway and offering no chain

Sherlock Close, Willenhall



£169,995 **NEW**

Three bedroom detached home situated on a sought after cul-de-sac in Short Heath comprising guest cloakroom, lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen, en suite, bathroom, garage and off road parking

Princethorpe Road, Willenhall



£170,000

NEW

Three bedroom detached on the popular "Scholars Gate" development and comprising guest cloakroom, lounge/diner, kitchen, conservatory, en suite, bathroom, garage and benefiting from central heating and double glazing. Internal viewing recommended

Yardley Street, Wednesbury



£120,000 **NEW**

Three bedroom semi-detached situated on a cul-de-sac comprising lounge, fitted kitchen, downstairs cloakroom, conservatory, bathroom and benefiting from central heating and double glazing

Rosehill, Willenhall



£140,000 **NEW**

Three bedroom semi-detached home comprising extended lounge/diner, extended kitchen/family room downstairs bathroom, upstairs wc, and gardens to the front and rear. Viewing recommended

Alton Avenue, Willenhall



£140,000 **NEW**

Extended three bedroom semi-detached must be viewed comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility, bathroom, rear garage and gardens to the front and rear. Viewing recommended

Edinburgh Drive, Summer Hayes



£150,000

A dormer bungalow comprising lounge, extended kitchen and bathroom, conservatory, three double bedrooms, front and rear gardens, driveway and no chain

Longwood Rise, Willenhall



Offers Over £145,000 **REDUCED**

A well-presented and recently reduced three bedroom semi-detached home off Stroud Avenue. An attractive home offered with no-chain. Ideally located for Jct. 10 M6 and local schools.

Instow Close, Willenhall



£118,750 **REDUCED**

Two bedroom semi-detached home situated on Coppice Farm. Well presented home ideal for first time buyer comprising; lounge, kitchen, bathroom, front and rear gardens and benefiting from central heating and double glazing

Moxley Road, Darlaston



Offers over £100,000 **REDUCED**

A three bedroom semi-detached home comprising guest cloakroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, spacious rear garden and off road parking

Gurnard Close, Willenhall



Offers Over £120,000 **REDUCED**

A semi-detached home situated on the popular COPPIE FARM development. Benefiting from a tandem garage, stunning conservatory and having been improved by the current owner.

Menai Close, Willenhall



Offers Over £100,000 **REDUCED**

A spacious three bedroom semi-detached home with potential for improving and upgrading. Would make a great family home. Viewing strongly advised. Vendor motivated to sell.

Ada Wrighton Close, Willenhall



£130,000 **NEW**

Three bedroom semi-detached situated in a cul-de-sac location in the popular New Invention area comprising lounge, study area, kitchen, bathroom, gardens to front and rear and being sold with no chain

Fletcher Road, Willenhall



£100,000 **NEW**

Two bedroom semi-detached home comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, conservatory, bathroom and being sold with no upward chain. Viewing recommended

Edinburgh Avenue, Bentley



£64,995 **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home comprising lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden. Offered to the market with no onward chain.

Brookhill Way, New Invention



£60,000 **NEW**

Modern style end terrace property comprising, lounge, kitchen, breakfast kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom and benefiting from double glazing and garden, viewing recommended. No Chain.

Brookhill Close, New Invention



£70,000 **NEW**

Four bedroom terraced home situated in New Invention and offering spacious accommodation comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, rear garden and being sold with no upward chain

15 Mountbatten Road, Bentley, Walsall WS2 0HN



PUBLIC NOTICE

We are acting for the mortgagees in possession and have received an offer of £58,000 on the above mentioned property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the agent before exchanges of contracts take place. Dixons Estate Agents, 53 High Road, Willenhall, WV12 4JR. Telephone 01902 634497



ALDRIDGE
56 Northgate

Viewing: 28th March at 10.30 am, 19th March at 9.00 am

**LOT 1**

In need of modernisation, this semi detached property has upvc double glazing and comprises Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility Room, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage. Off street parking, fore and rear Gardens

GUIDE PRICE £120,000-£130,000

PERRY BARR
66 Coleraine Road

Viewing: 19th and 30th March at 10.45 am

**LOT 3**

A traditionally styled semi detached property offering well planned accommodation in need of some modernisation but offering ideal opportunity for investment. Porch, Front door to Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens

GUIDE PRICE £85,000-£95,000

ALDRIDGE
138 Walsall Wood Road

Viewing: 28th March 11.00am

**LOT 7**GUIDE PRICE £70,000-£80,000
Spacious 2 bedrommed ground floor maisonette: Porch, Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, 2 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Separate W.C., Garage and communal grounds.**WEDNESBURY**
2 Wigginsmill Road

Viewing: 18th March 11.00am, 30th March at 12.00 noon

**LOT 9**

This 1970 s detached dormer bungalow is situated in a prominent corner position and comprises: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Inner Hallway, Bathroom, Four Bedrooms, Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens

GUIDE PRICE £90,000-£110,000

WALSALL
88a The Crescent

Viewing: 19th and 30th March at 10.00am

**LOT 10**

Traditionally styled semi detached dwelling house is situated on a prominent corner plot and comprises:- Porch, Entrance Hall, Guest Cloakroom, Lounge, Separate Dining Room, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Tandem Double Garage/Workshop, In and Out Driveway, Fore and Rear Gardens.

GUIDE PRICE £175,000-£185,000

WALSALL
4 Norwich Road

Viewing: 18th March 11.45am, 28th March 12.15pm

**LOT 2**

GUIDE PRICE £50,000 PLUS

Semi detached property comprising:- Porch, Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens.

WILLENHALL
Land adj 18 Bentley Lane, Off High Road

Viewing: 19th March 9.30 am, 28th March 10.00 am

**WITHDRAWN**
LOT 2A

GUIDE PRICE £30,000-£35,000

A freehold Building Plot approx 0.05acres, with Outline Planning Permission (Application No 07/1622/FL/W6 Walsall MBC) for a detached dwelling house and garage. Viewing: The site is open for viewing. Viewers do so at their own risk

BROWNHILLS
58 Lindon Road

Viewing: 19th March 9.30 am, 28th March 10.00 am

**LOT 4**
GUIDE PRICE £40,000-£50,000

Traditionally styled mid terraced comprising 2 Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Shower Room, 3 Bedrooms, Fore and Rear Gardens.

BROWNHILLS
156 Watling Street

Viewing: 18th March 12.45pm, 28th March 9.30am



In need of total modernisation and improvement this three bedroom semi detached property offers Porch, Reception Hall, Kitchen, Lounge, Sitting Room, Three Bedrooms and Bathroom. Outside: Fore and Rear Gardens.

LOT 5

GUIDE PRICE £60,000-£70,000

BLOXWICH
105 Chepstow Road

18th March 12.15pm, 28th March 11.45am

**LOT 6**
GUIDE PRICE £60,000-£70,000

This modern mid town house residence has undergone modernisation and improvement and comprises:- Lounge, Kitchen Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Off Road Parking, Fore and Rear Gardens.

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@ 6.00PM
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Darwall Street, Walsall

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WEST BROMWICH Whitworth Drive Four bedroom family home offering well proportioned accommodation including master bedroom with en-suite shower £239,950	NEW WEDNESBURY Westmore Way This splendidly appointed extended five bedroom detached property must be viewed internally to be fully appreciated. Recently refitted kitchen, two reception rooms, garage and enclosed rear garden. Competitively priced for quick sale. Vacant possession £179,950	NEW WEDNESBURY St Lukes Road an immaculately presented, double glazed and centrally heated three bedroom semi detached property at the head of a quiet cul de sac. £149,950	NEW WEDNESBURY Lime Road A spacious three bedroom semi detached house in good order throughout with double glazing, central heating, large lounge and rear garden with substantial outbuildings and ample off road parking. £129,950
NEW WEDNESBURY Wellcroft Street Immaculate throughout. A two bedroom traditional semi with central heating, double glazing, £124,950	NEW DARLASTON Sandwell Avenue This two bedroom extended semi detached property is situated in a small cul-de-sac location and benefits from double glazing and condensing central heating system. Viewing recommended £104,950	NEW DARLASTON Wolverhampton Street COMPETITIVELY PRICE DOUBLE GLAZED AND CENTRALLY HEATED TWO BEDROOM MID TERRACE IDEAL AS A STARTER HOME. TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, LONG GARDEN, AVAILABLE WITH IMMEDIATE POSSESSION. £69,950	REDUCED WEST BROMWICH BUSTLEHOLME LANE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spacious detached house * Fully fitted kitchen * Extensively renovated and refurbished * Family bathroom and en-suite to master * Four bedrooms * Extended lounge and separate dining room * Enclosed south facing rear garden * Viewing via Wednesbury office Offers Over £239,950
REDUCED WEST BROMWICH BUSTLEHOLME LANE Open Viewing Sat 19th March 11am - 12 Midday Offered for sale with no upward chain, this is a rare opportunity to purchase a traditional-style two bedroom detached bungalow in the very sought after Bustleholme Lane. £185,000	REDUCED WEDNESBURY OLD BURY STREET Having been long held by the current owners, internal viewing is considered essential to appreciate the quality and size of the internal accommodation which benefits from double glazing and double central heating and double garage and briefly comprises of: reception hall, dining kitchen, family bathroom, front and rear garden, detached garage to rear £139,950	REDUCED WEDNESBURY HAWKSWOOD DRIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Three bedroom semi detached * Lounge/dining room * Fitted kitchen * Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified) * En suite to master bedroom * Garage and driveway * Front and rear gardens £134,995	REDUCED WEDNESBURY THE FURLONG Skitts are delighted to offer for sale this modern style end town house, having three bedrooms and conveniently situated on a corner plot the property is fully double glazed and centrally heated and has the added bonus of a garage and ample parking. £122,500
REDUCED Wednesbury Darby Road Situated in a popular road, this three bedroom semi is competitively priced and offers well appointed accommodation including benefits from central heating and double glazing throughout and briefly comprises of : £117,500	REDUCED WEST BROMWICH SIDDONS WAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Modern-style mid town house * Immaculately presented throughout * Two bedrooms * Situated in a cul de sac close to Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, ground floor Bathroom, three bedrooms, attractive gardens rear and off road parking to the fore. £112,000	REDUCED WEDNESBURY VICARAGE ROAD Situated in a very popular road, close to Wednesbury town centre, this well appointed traditional-style mid terraced property must be viewed internally to be fully appreciated. Being competitively priced for a quick sale, the accommodation includes two reception rooms, two bedrooms plus attic room - fantastic value. £89,950	REDUCED DARLASTON WAVERLEY ROAD Situated in a popular road, close to the amenities of Darlaston town centre, this spacious traditional-style mid terrace property has central heating and double glazing and offers potential for further improvement.. £84,950
REDUCED Darlaston Hall Street East A three bedroom end terraced property with central heating, double glazing, and no upward chain. Having a ground floor £79,950	SOLD SUBJECT TO CONTRACT SALE AGREED IN LAST 7 DAYS Darlaston Heathfield Lane West Having the benefit of central heating and double glazing, this traditional semi would be ideal for first time buyers looking for a home in which to grow up. Located in a popular local schools and close to Darlaston town centre and transport links to Wolverhampton. £79,950	SOLD SUBJECT TO CONTRACT SALE AGREED IN LAST 7 DAYS WEDNESBURY MYND ROAD Internal viewing is considered essential to appreciate the quality of the accommodation offered by this three bedroom traditional-style semi-detached property, situated on a generous plot with potential for extension (subject to local authority planning permission). Benefiting from central heating and double glazing and an intruder alarm system. £124,950	SOLD SUBJECT TO CONTRACT SALE AGREED IN LAST 7 DAYS WEDNESBURY CRANKHALL LANE This nicely presented three bedroom town house has been extended to provide excellent family accommodation. With central heating and double glazing throughout the property benefits from off road parking to the front £94,950

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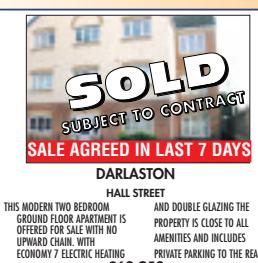
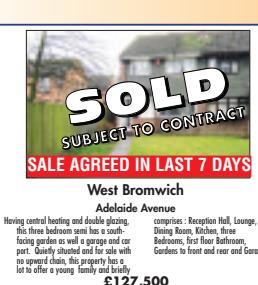
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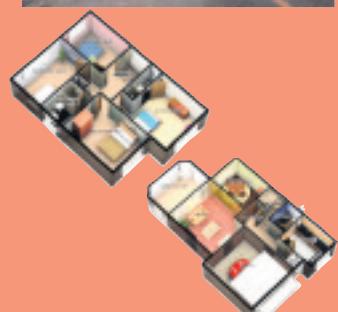
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TOYOTA VERSO-S

ROAD TEST

Toyota courts 'empty nesters'

YOU are unlikely to see any 'Saga' drivers trying out their new Verso-S on the local race track – but that is not to say this new mini-MPV is unworthy of the Toyota badge.

Between 1999 and 2006 Toyota sold more than 150,000 of the Yaris Verso in Europe, but then dropped the model.

Since then the increasing number of affluent 'Saga' empty nesters wanting a car that offered high seating, easy entry and egress in a well-built, comfortable and reliable car have had to look elsewhere.

So the market has been filled by a number of other makes including the Honda Jazz, Nissan Note, Kia Venga and Hyundai ix20.

But now Toyota has bounced back into the market, and is even offering the Verso-S at a special introductory price for the next six months. The new model is based on the latest version of the Yaris, but is being built in Japan rather than France.

There are just two models to choose from, both with the same 1.3 litre 98PS petrol engine delivering only 125Nm torque. So it is hardly going to win any acceleration races and needs all six ratios of its six speed manual gearbox, or if you prefer it, the automatic CVT-7 version, to make reasonable progress.

In the CVT version you can just put the car in Drive and let it choose its own ratios, although I did find this version noisier than the manual. Surprisingly, it is more economical than the manual version.

However another advantage of this version is that it is the only automatic MPV of this size to fall into the £30 a year tax bracket – the manual is £90 a year to tax.

The car offers five comfortable fully bolted seats, split rear seats that fold with just one touch, a lipless rear sill with front 393 and 336 litre of load space (more than enough for the weekly shopping trip or weekend away).

There are two trim models to choose from – the TR and the T-Spirit. The T-Spirit has even more bootspace because



The Verso S is cheap to run, easy to drive and comfortable – but no diesels are on offer. It is well equipped in both forms and has bags of room for the shopping

instead of a space saver spare it has a tyre repair kit and that makes 429 litres of space. This is because the T-Spirit comes with a super glass panoramic roof that stretches from front to rear of the car. But it is heavier than a metal roof. So to compensate Toyota dropped the spare wheel. You can always buy the spare wheel as an extra and that will not increase the car tax.

Central locking

Both models are well equipped – all have height adjustable seats, adjustable steering wheel, lots of airbags, ABS with EBD and Brake Assist, reversing camera, electric front windows, six speaker RDS radio/CD/MP3 player, manual air conditioning, remote central locking and front fog lamps.

Panoramic

The T-Spirit version gains alloy wheels, all-round electric windows, the panoramic roof and rear privacy glass.

There is also a touch screen Bluetooth information and entertainment system that doubles up for the reversing camera. And from May this year this can be boosted for £500 to become a full scale sat nav system. It will then have access to the Google local search system when used with a compatible smartphone.

Although there is a diesel version it will not be offered in the UK because Toyota GB argues that low mileage drivers will not find it cost effective to spend an extra £1,000-plus for the diesel engine. The diesel engine also does not like repeated short runs.

Toyota expects to sell around 30,000 a year in Europe and about 3,000 in the UK. Virtually all will go to retail customers, and it expects the majority of older drivers to plump for the CVT version.

Prices start from £14,645 for the TR manual, (reduced to £13,995 for six months) and £15,745 for the T-Spirit manual (reduced to £14,995). The CVT versions add £1,150. On the

road the car is easy to drive, ride quality and comfort are good and there are no squeaks or rattles.

In the standard TR version you get a lot of equipment that is not offered by the lower priced competitors, and also lower tax bands. The car also comes with the five year Toyota warranty. It is graded BE for insurance

Fact file

Price: TR Manual: £14,645 (reduced to £13,995) T-Spirit: £15,745 (reduced to £14,995). CVT: add £1,150.

Length: 3,990mm.

Economy: Manual: 51.4 mpg, CVT: 54.3 (combined average)

Acceleration: 0-62mph, Manual 13.3 secs, CVT: 13.7 secs.

Top Speed: 106mph

By Brian Vertigan

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7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. See your local dealer or visit www.kia.co.uk for full warranty terms and exclusions. Price correct at time of going to press and specification is subject to change without notice. Model shown is MY11 1.0 Picanto 1 @ £5,370 On The Road (OTR) including £2,000 trade-in allowance. OTR price includes VAT, insurance, road tax and delivery. Metallic paint is available for an extra £405 charge. Retail customers only. Subject to availability on vehicles registered between 01 February and 31 March 2011. 7 Year Switch offer excludes Picanto Spice. Offer is not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms and conditions apply - please see your local dealer for full details.

Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100 km) for the Kia Rio range are: Urban: 30.7 (9.2) - 52.3 (5.4). Extra Urban: 50.4 (5.6) - 68.9 (4.1). Combined: 40.4 (7.0) - 62.8 (4.5). CO₂ emissions are 165 - 119 g/km.

7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. See your local dealer or visit www.kia.co.uk for full warranty terms and exclusions. Price correct at time of going to press and specification is subject to change without notice. Model shown is MY11 1.4 Rio 1 @ £6,540 On The Road (OTR) including £2,000 trade-in allowance. OTR price includes VAT, insurance, road tax and delivery. 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and Vehicle First Registration Fee. Metallic / mica paint is available for an extra £405 charge. Retail customers only. Subject to availability on vehicles registered between 01 February and 31 March 2011. Offer is not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms and conditions apply - please see your local dealer for full details.

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**Renault set to unveil
seven vehicles at NEC**



The Kangoo Maxi Van ZE is one of seven new vehicles Renault will be unveiling at the CV Show

RENAULT will unveil no fewer than seven new vehicles at this year's CV Show at the NEC in Birmingham, including the French brand's compact vans will be shown from autumn this year in both two and five-seat versions.

Kangoo ZE vans are priced at £16,990 for the van, £17,990 (longer wheelbase two-seat Maxi) and £18,690 (five-seat Maxi) excluding VAT, plus £59 monthly battery lease over four years/9,000 miles per year.

Taking pride of place in its 14-strong vehicle display, will be Renault's 100 per cent electric Kangoo ZE.

Unsurprisingly, against a backdrop of ever-increasing fuel prices, Renault is expecting the largest draw on its stand to be its new Kangoo, which aims to prove that

electric LCVs can be affordable to run, good to drive, as well as offer a more relaxed driving environment, due to its near silent operation.

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Limelight

Sharing the limelight with their sibling, and emphasising the growth of Renault's fully renewed LCV range ahead of their UK launches in the second quarter of 2011, will be several new additions to the Master range. Four factory-built products - Box Van, Dropside,

Tipper and 17-seat minibus, plus two locally converted products - Luton Van and Curtainside.

Fleet and commercial vehicle operations director, Darren Payne, said: "We've made no bones about our ambitious plans to increase our share of the UK conversions market to eight per cent in the months ahead."

"Our wealth of new models on show underlines that message, and I'm equally pleased to be showing Kangoo Van ZE, the first affordable factory-built electric van in the UK."

"We truly believe we have something for everyone and I'm genuinely looking forward to seeing customer reactions to our expanded range in a few weeks time."

Renault will be based in Hall 5 at the show.

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SPORT**BLOXWICH UTD****Lions work hard to get the victory****BLOXWICH UTD 3
DARLASTON TOWN 2**

The Red Lions were made to work hard for the three points against a youthful and spirited Darlaston.

The visitors were well on top in the first 15 minutes of the game and only good goalkeeping from Tony Simkiss prevented them taking the lead.

Bloxwich's first real chance arrived when John Freeman's shot rebounded to Alan Wilkes who poked the ball wide.

Bloxwich then had a penalty appeal waved away in the 25th minute when Wilkes was fouled in the box when running on to a good ball from Adam Simkiss.

Wilkes then saw a first-time volley saved by the keeper before a Karl Edwards header was tipped over by the visitor's keeper with half an hour played.

Darlaston got back into the game and forced Simkiss to make an excellent double save to keep the scores level at half time.

The home side took the lead in the 56th minute when Carl Morris volleyed into the top corner as the ball was headed back into the box from a corner.

The second goal arrived on the 70th minute when Martin Lewis bundled the ball in at the far post from a Simkiss free kick from out wide.

Ash Francis pulled a goal back for Darlaston when he slotted the ball home as Bloxwich failed to clear.

Martin Lewis then netted his second of the game when he reacted first after the Darlaston keeper split a Wilkes free kick.

Darlaston added a second when intercepting a short back pass from Coyne.

JUNIORS**Blox miss out in both matches****GORNAL ATHLETIC 4
BLOXWICH UNITED 1**

After a fairly even first half with very few chances Bloxwich never got going in the second half and were made to pay the price.

The visitors' collapse began

when Gornal scored two goals in quick succession and take complete control of the game.

The home side added another goal midway through the half before making it four nil late in the

game. United grabbed a consolation goal thanks to Martin Lewis.

**HEATH HAYES 2
BLOXWICH UNITED 1 U15S**

The Red Lions were unlucky not to come away with the points as they dominated the play for the majority of the game.

Bloxwich missed chances in the first half and were made to pay when Hayes scored from the penalty spot after a handball midway through the second half.

Liam Spalding headed home a well deserved equaliser from a swinging corner minutes later before the home side broke away and netted a second completely against the run of play.

Bloxwich pressed hard for the equaliser in the closing stages but couldn't find a way past the Hayes keeper who was outstanding. Callum Whelan was named managers MoM and Jonathan Akiboye got the parents vote.

WILLENHALL TOWN
Battling Reds
can't quite
seal the deal**WILLENHALL 1 WESTFIELDS 2**

Another battling performance by the Lockmen saw them come up short against Westfields in the Midland Alliance. Despite matching their seventh-placed opponents for an hour, the home side slipped to a defeat when a point was deserved.

Willenhall threatened first when Craig Oldfield saw a 20-yard free kick at keeper Jamie Moore.

Tom Evans then threatened with a fine run and cross that was hacked off the line. Westfields then threatened the Reds when two fierce efforts were deflected wide for corners towards the end of the half. A run from half way by Andre Calder saw the centre-half blast into the side netting in injury time.

The first of two good penalty shoutouts was turned down when Mike Robertson saw his shot blocked by a hand before he was played clear on goal, only to be brought down from behind just inside the penalty area. Surprisingly play was waved on, much to furious home protests.

Westfields took the lead on 66 minutes when Craig Jones fired in a curling free-kick that went round the wall and into the far corner of the net past keeper Liam Flynn.

Again the Lockmen were aggrieved, believing Tom Wright had cleanly won the ball only to be penalised. On 83 minutes a long ball forward was latched onto by Westfields substitute Aaron Hopkinson.

With the Willenhall defence stationary as they appealed for offside against another forward, with the flag staying correctly down, Hopkinson raced goalwards and rounded Flynn before rolling home the settling goal.

In spite of a 25-yard screamer from Matt Whitehouse on 88 minutes which rocketed home via a post, the Reds came up just short again, against a good Westfields side, and remain one off the bottom.

CYCLING
Rider is the Don
during hilly time**Walsall Roads Cycling Club**

Congratulations to Don Field who has started the racing season with terrific form, following on from Don's great rides last weekend.

He rode the Stourbridge Velo 22 mile hilly time trial on March 12 as the only participating Walsall Roads Cycling Club member completing the distance in a personal best time of 58m and 47s.

This weekend saw many Walsall Cycling club members flying out to sunny Majorca for what will be a week long, cycle training holiday. The members are really looking forward to the break which will see them covering nearly 100 miles each day, on very quiet roads and some scenic mountain highways to the north of the island.

For more information about cycling visit the Walsall Roads Cycling Club website: www.walsallroadscc.co.uk.

WALSALL 0 LEIGHTON ORIENT 2

It was perhaps fitting that, on Pancake Day, Walsall's revival fell flat. A night which promised so much, delivered so little to leave the Saddlers again looking up at safety.

Boss Dean Smith labelled last Tuesday's outing with Leyton Orient flat and it was the result which halted the euphoria of his reign.

It was always going to happen – Walsall were never going to maintain their early momentum under Smith – but what they must do is recapture it.

They have lost games before but – being so close to the end of the season – they can ill afford more nights like this.

There is reason to be pessimistic – it comes naturally to the battle-weary Saddlers fans after the club dropped back into League One's bottom four.

A limp defeat, in front of the lowest league crowd this season, isn't going to inspire confidence but the situation is far from irretrievable.

Remember where they were just two months ago? The survival race will go to the wire – teams won't have played the same amount of games until mid-April – and no-one can be written off. Everything points to a dramatic finale. Julian Gray and Marc-Antoine Gbamin rattled the woodwork while Matt Richards, Richard Tauntry and Jon Macken forced Jamie Jones into smart stops.

Doubled

They edged the first half – only to be undone by Harry Kane's 43rd minute header. But once substitute Jonathan Tehoue doubled the Os advantage the visitors cruised home. The Saddlers, despite some decent possession, lacked the tempo and cutting edge to find a way back.

Just two goals in seven games – despite the recent success in defence – isn't enough and will contribute to Walsall's downfall should they fail to address it.

The sight of Smith keeping three men up while his side defend a corner is encouraging – the boss will never ditch his attacking philosophy – but he can do little about the chances his players pass up.

Should Gray maintain his form then the ammunition will be there, they just need a marksman to take advantage. The goal tally of 40 in 36 games – or 1.1 every 90 minutes – is higher than the average at the bottom but unlikely to be good enough to stay up.

The Saddlers made one change from the previous Saturday's Swindon stalemate with Darryl Westlake replacing Aaron Lescott – who is out for at least two weeks with medial ligament damage.

And they were comfortable early on, two of the division's four teams cancelled each other out, both happy to soak up any heat, until the 19th minute when the Saddlers almost broke the deadlock.

Richards' stinging drive was parried by Jamie Jones, Gray smacked the post with the rebound and Ledesma's follow-up tickled wide.

The Saddlers pinned their visitors back with little reward but Gbamin almost marked his home debut with a stunner when his 30-yard effort hit the left of the bar.

PELSALL VILLA**Villa dig in at Badgers**

A first half penalty from Andrew Bentley and a Daniel Hal goal had put Villa in the driving seat but a goal on 60 minutes by Richard Jones made it an interesting last half hour.

Gary Fife's late substitution saw him create chances but Villa rode their luck for a change to come away with a much needed three points.

Mitchell Green was fouled wide on the Villa right, John Little's free kick met by Aaron Simpson to head over.

The Badgers' first effort saw a left wing free kick headed over by Matthew Skinner at the near post.

Daniel Hall raced clear on the Villa right, his cross headed over by Scott Chapman.

Two minutes later Chapman got in a downward header from a left wing corner, keeper Adam Whitehouse somehow keeping the ball out.

Then on 19 minutes Mark Wooldridge beat the keeper to the ball wide on the left, his ball was behind Green but was collected by Andrew Bentley who was

BROCTON 1 PELSALL VILLA 2

forced away from goal. Then Wooldridge made space wide left, his cross inches away from Green.

Wooldridge ran on to a ball in the centre of the box, his shot was charged down, the rebound was collected by the striker only for him to be brought down as he turned.

Bentley's penalty had too much power for Whitehouse who guessed right but couldn't keep the ball out.

The first effort of the second half saw Lomas race on to a ball through the centre. Collins racing from his line to make a save.

It proved crucial as two minutes later Hall wide right delivered a ball under the bar at the far post keeper Whitehouse pushed the ball on to the angle and into the net.

The two goal cushion only lasted six minutes, Aaron Gough crossed from the left, Lomas saw his first time drive pushed on to his left hand post by Collins, Jones

reacting first to force the ball home.

On 71 minutes Wooldridge released Chapman on goal, keeper Whitehouse out quickly to save bravely at his feet.

Gough hit a left wing cross to the far post and Gary Fife on as substitute planted a header back across goal and off the post with the keeper beaten. It was Gough again 10 minutes later, he crossed from wide left and the ball bounced away to safety off the far post.

Fife raced into the left of the box but Simpson saved Villa with a superb last ditch tackle. Right on a time a flicked header by Rob Winstanley put Fife in again but under pressure from Simpson he fired wide. Villa rode their luck at times but after the season they've had it's about time fortunes changed. It was another hard working performance by the Villa youngsters.

Villa entertain Southampton United at the Bush on March 19, kickoff 3.00 pm.
Bill Shaw.

RUSHALL OLYMPIC**Pics prove to be too strong****SHEFFIELD FC 2 RUSHALL OLYMPIC 3**

Sheffield defence to plant a powerful downward header inside the far post from 10 yards out.

In the 38th minute the most controversial moment of the contest arrived as Rushall keeper Gemmill dashed towards the right by-line to intercept the run of home skipper Adams.

However, after the stopper only succeeded in committing a foul on the front runner the resulting free-kick awarded by Mr Dudley was allowed to be taken quickly and the victim of the challenge spotted an opportunity and promptly drilled the ball into the back of the net from an acute angle past the stranded Pic's stopper. Half-Time:

Sheffield FC 1 Rushall 1

A minute after the hour mark and Olympic forged back into the lead when defender Cyrus Lewis upended Obeng from behind just inside the left side of the box, resulting in a penalty. From the 12-yard

mark striker Matt Lewis netted his second goal in successive games by sending keeper Whatzits the wrong way in the process.

Four minutes later things got even better for Rushall as they established a comfortable two-goal cushion. Obeng pulled the ball back from the left by-line to Ashton who crashed a first time drive on to the underside of the crossbar and down over the goal line from 12 yards out.

On 69 minutes keeper Gemmill was called into action with a superb instinctive save to push away Andrew Gascoigne's vicious drive for a corner.

With four minutes remaining the hosts made the visitors' hearts flutter when a free-kick just outside the penalty area was drilled in by substitute Ant Lynn who deflected off defender Ashton and past the wrong footed custodian. Rushall almost put the game beyond doubt. Obeng was found by Lewis and an attempted lobbed finish from 15 yards dropped just shy.

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MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

Where to now? The mystery of the Banks's Stadium ownership is unravelling, piece by piece.

The bone of contention, the burning issue among Walsall's long-suffering fans, is coming into sharp focus.

Speculation has always been rife but with the announcement landlord Suffolk Life is selling up, the club can hardly end years of conjecture. But what does it mean and where does it leave the Saddlers? They will have a new landlord. We know that. How much do

Suffolk Life want? Why and when are other matters. Where is the money going and to whom? Suffolk Life are the main beneficiaries but will they recoup it all? How much they paid for the site in the first place remains a mystery.

Above all, though, fans want to know where it leaves the club and want-away chairman Jeff Bonser. Of course, we know Bonser has a pension plan with Suffolk Life, as do many other people. That's where it gets the biggest worry.

For years fans have been concerned about the spiraling amount of rent the club has to pay. But the current evidence points to something the fans do not want to see.

Suffolk Life own the freehold. Walsall pay their rent and, while they administer the pension fund, Suffolk Life do not contribute to it.

What is black and white though is the stadium is up for sale and, depending on your view, it could work one of two ways.

It pushes Bonser closer to the exit door and sparks hopes of a new era at WS1.

It leaves it wide open for a buyer to come in and purchase the club lock, stock and barrel.

Previously, suitors would not have

touched it had they not been able to secure the land too – but now the option is there.

We know Bonser wants out and this could be the tipping point he and the club's fans have been waiting for.

Walsall Council – who have been continually courted by the Saddlers – have ruled themselves out of the running.

The club can't afford to buy the freehold themselves and, in the current economic climate, who will come in? There lies the biggest worry.

Should a company who do not have the club's best interests at heart buy the freehold, it could lead to trouble.

The Saddlers cannot afford to have an overbearing landlord.

Settled

Also, after the dust has settled, they will still be paying the best part of £450,000 a year in rent to play at their own ground.

But DTZ – the company charged with finding a buyer – have moved to reassure worried fans. They and the Saddlers are adamant the club's future is secure.

DTZ's Nick Allan said the rent will only increase with RPI (retail price index) so there is little scope for the Saddlers being priced out of their home. They can't control who their new landlords are – as much as you

would have no say if someone wanted to buy your rented flat – but as long as they keep

paying rent there is not an issue.

They have an 83-year lease on the site they moved to from Fellows Park in 1990 so the club is on solid ground. Why then, is there a sense of foreboding?

Uncertainty breeds uncertainty and unless Bonser moves swiftly to clarify his position, speculation and conjecture will fill the void. The chairman's self-imposed silence only serves to add to the confusion.

It is already at an all-time low and he stopped attending games this season because of his nose-diving popularity. But, after these developments, he must remove the gag.

No-one at the club can answer the questions apart from him.

He has a well-known dislike of the media.

Until a buyer is found and a bid is made, the Saddlers will continue as normal – albeit as the uncertainty continues in the background. We can't forget there is a relegation battle to be won. Regardless of who owns the ground, the club do not know what division they are going to be in next season.

The players have enough pressure on them with the club sitting fourth bottom ahead of this Saturday's crunch visit of Hartlepool United.

Relegation from League One is unlikely to have an impact on the freehold price but the Saddlers cannot afford to stand in limbo – or on or off the pitch.

Fans in fear over sale of their stadium

Worried Walsall fans have revealed their fears after the Banks's Stadium was put up for sale.

Suffolk Life, who own the freehold, confirmed they will sell up, but have not stated a price tag.

The Saddlers issued a statement and insisted any change of ownership will have no bearing on the running of the club. The stadium's ownership has been a major issue with supporters. The club pay rent to Suffolk Life and they were charged £466,752 last year.

Supporters group Unity admitted they were cautious but hope it can lead to a positive change.

They said: "Unity welcomes the news that the freehold of Walsall FC has become available to purchase. Last season we campaigned for the return of the freehold to Walsall FC and we remain cautious as to the ambition of any would-be landlord but we hope this is a progressive step in the transformation of our football club."

Newspaper columnist Darren Fellows revealed his concern over the potential deal and believes it could spell trouble.

"This is a day which has been looming for a long time, since they sold Fellows Park and chose to rent the Banks's Stadium," he said.

"This is what people worry about, if it's in different hands you lose control. Jeff (Bonser, chairman) has his pension with Suffolk Life so there was at least a mutual interest. If it becomes separate then it's dangerous. Jeff needs to reassure people."

The club was due to meet with Unity, the Trust and Supporters Club on Wednesday for pre-arranged talks.

Chairman Bonser has stated he wants the freehold back with the club and has been looking to quit the Saddlers for around 10 years.

DTZ, the property agents charged with finding a buyer, believe the freehold could be sold by July.

They have had no early interest and Nick Allan, a senior director, reassured supporters a new owner could not price them out of their home.

He said: "Walsall have the right to stay there for 17 years and have the ability to extend it for another 33 years after that. There are no mechanisms in the agreement to change the rent other than RPI (retail price index). New owners can't rip it up and say I'm going to charge £1m a year."

Business as usual – Smith

Boss Dean Smith has insisted Walsall's survival bid will not be derailed by the uncertainty surrounding the Banks's Stadium.

The Saddlers are embroiled in a titanic relegation scrap at the foot of League One and sit fourth-bottom. But Smith is adamant it won't upset their hopes ahead of Saturday's crunch visit of Hartlepool.

"The only thing we want to focus on is the Hartlepool game. There's nothing for the players or myself to worry about," he said.

"The players won't be worried about it. They are employees of the club and the freehold is nothing to do with them. They'll get on with things. I have been filled in by the chairman (Jeff Bonser) and Stéphane (Gamble, chief executive) and I've known what's been going on but it doesn't affect what we do. It's just business as usual."

Suffolk Life are yet to reveal the asking price for the freehold.

The Saddlers issued a statement yesterday and insisted the sale of the ground will not affect the running of the club.

Smith remains confident the Saddlers can win their survival fight.

He said: "We might have only won one in five – but we've only lost one in five. My glass is half-full."

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Alex Nicholls and Max Ehmer stretch for the ball



Walsall chairman
Jeff Bonser



Chief executive
Stefan Gamble

Great escape still viable but things must improve

First, the good news. Walsall are a point closer to League One survival and the 'Great Escape' is still possible. And now for the brutal reality.

Without a vast improvement on their latest showing, the Saddlers can forget about staying up.

Dean Smith's men got away with a dismal display against one of their relegation rivals on Saturday as they emerged with a draw from an afternoon that could have seen them beaten heavily.

But the look of disgust on Chris Nicholl's face at the final whistle suggested no-one in the Saddlers camp was being blinded by the unlikely result.

The former gaffer, who has been hired to help the current Banks's Stadium boss Dean Smith, had the look of a man ready to explode at the defensive chaos he had witnessed.

Smith remained polite and amiable but even he could not hide his disappointment. "Not good enough" was the collective verdict. And it was tough to disagree.

To their credit, Smith's men battled well in the closing stages, with a goal-line clearance from full-back Tom Williams denying the Grovers a victory.

And amazingly, with a little more composure, Saddlers substitute Emmanuel Ledesma could have handed the visitors a win in the closing stages but excitement got the better of the Argentine, who sent a free shot against the crossbar.

After doing so well in recent months, the Saddlers produced a performance in Somerset that reminded us why they were all-but dead and buried when Smith

took charge. In possession they lacked care, composure and purpose. And defensively? Where to start?

During his half-time stint as a radio pundit, former Saddlers goalkeeper Mick Kearns likened their first-half defence to "Fred Karno's Circus".

On reflection, he must have wondered whether the analogy was a little harsh on the famous theatre impresario. While Karno's shows were based on pre-mediated farce, the Saddlers produced a spontaneous display of slapstick defending.

It appeared to be a worrying return to bad habits at the worst possible time. Had Yeovil's Andy Williams not suffered an afternoon from hell in front of goal, Smith's men might have been crushed by the interval.

It looked as though Smith's men might make it to the break with their lead intact, but the hosts broke through seconds before the interval.

Even then, Andy Williams' needed some help as his header from Luke Ayling's cross looked to be rebounding to safety off the base of the post before it struck the hapless Andy Butler and crept in.

The second half was a non-event as two sides low on confidence produced a poor spectacle.

Disjointed

The Saddlers had no answer to Yeovil's attacks and their back four became increasingly stretched and disjointed.

Yet in the midst of the Grovers' dominance it was the visitors who somehow went ahead, Darryl Westlake's persistence and Julian Gray's shot forcing a corner from which Jon Macken was on hand to score from a yard out.

It looked as though Smith's men might make it to the break with their lead intact, but the hosts broke through seconds before the interval.

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